University of Alberta

Searching for the Soviets: The Historical Culture of the Stalin Period

by

Robert John Heynen ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

in
History

Department of History and Classics

Edmonton, Alberta

Fall, 1996

National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-612-18158-8

Canadä

University of Alberta

Library Release Form

Name of Author: Robert John Heynen

Title of Thesis: Searching for the Soviets: The Historical Culture of the Stalin Period

Degree: Master of Arts

Year this Degree Granted: 1996

Permission is hereby granted to the University of Alberta Library to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly, or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves all other publication and other rights in association with the copyright in the thesis, and except as hereinbefore provided, neither the thesis nor any substantial portion thereof may be printed or otherwise reproduced in any material form whatever without the author's prior written permission.

36 Burland St.
Ottawa, Ontario
K2B 6J8

June 17, 1996

University of Alberta

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled 'Searching for the Soviets: The Historical Culture of the Stalin Period' submitted by Robert John Heynen in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in History.

David R Marples

Professor David R. Marples

Frances Swyripa

Associate Professor Frances Swyripa

E A McDougall

Associate Professor E. Ann McDougall

Professor Derek Sayer

June 7, 1996

ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with the ways in which history was perceived in Soviet culture and society under Stalin, and the role of that historical culture in the formation of a Soviet identity. The contention is that in mass culture a more or less coherent conception of a Soviet nation arose during the 1934-1953 period, a nation that was portrayed as having a long history extending to the pre-revolutionary period.

The paper begins with a consideration of the official conception of history as set forward in certain key texts, the discipline of history, and the socialist realist aesthetic. It then looks at the ways in which a notion of 'Soviet' developed in the broader historical culture, as well as at the Revolution and Stalin as the key figures around which that culture coalesced. The sources used include novels, plays, films, paintings and propaganda in addition to Soviet historical texts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Out of the many people who kept me sane throughout my two years here (and you know who you are) I would like to single out three people for special thanks: Piali, whose Irish wit and Bengali wisdom never failed; Yoke Sum, who theorized away any angst that plagued me; and Ken, who, despite all his evil influences, was a constant source of ideas and good cheer. In addition, Professor Ann McDougall, in her courses and conversations, was always insightful and provocative and, along with the rest of my committee, provided an entertaining and informative defense. Most of all I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor David Marples, without whose support, encouragement and valuable insight this thesis could not have been completed. It's been fun.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Illustrations

Introduction....................................1

Chapter 1 *The Whirlpool of History*....................3

Chapter 2 *The Making of History*......................34

Chapter 3 *History and the Nation*.....................75

Chapter 4 *Scenes From the Revolution*................140

Conclusion....................................178

Bibliography..................................185

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1 *Worker and Collective Farm Girl* by Vera Mukhina...77

Figure 2 *A Daughter of Soviet Kirghizia* by Semion Chuikov..84

Figure 3 Great Patriotic War poster by Kukryniksy.........107

Figure 4 *Mother of a Partisan* by Sergei Gerasimov.........110

Figure 5 *At an Old Urals Works* by Boris Ioganson..........145

Figure 6 *Volga Barge Haulers* by Ilya Repin................151

INTRODUCTION

At a speech given to a Stakhanovite conference in 1937 Stalin made the following startling remark: "Leaders come and go, but the people remains. Only the people is eternal."[1] Although it may have been a disconcerting statement to the few old Bolsheviks who may have been present, the majority of the people listening would have considered it entirely fitting. Nevertheless, for a professed Marxist-Leninist to speak of 'the people,' and an eternal one at that, seems rather strange.

Stalin's statement located 'the people' at a specific juncture, namely that of history and identity. He evoked a community that had a stable identity which endured through, or even outside of, time. It also implied a community that was more than simply a conglomeration of people. His use of the Russian word *narod* (people) implied a shared culture, an almost spiritual unity that transcended all other differences.

This paper will look at the context within which Stalin was able to meke such a statement. It will focus on an examination of the construction of a Soviet identity or 'people' through the historical culture of the Stalin period

---

[1] Joseph Stalin, 'Rech na prieme rukovodiashchikh rabotnikov i stakhanovtsev metallurgicheskoi u ugolnoi promyshlennost rukovoditeliami partii i pravitelsva, 29 oktiabria 1937 g.,' [Speech to a Stakhanovite Conference, October 29, 1937], in Sochineniia, (Stanford, 1967), vol. 1, p. 254.

(1934-1953). During that time a pan-Soviet culture arose, one that gradually began to reach the large majority of the population in most areas of the Union. An important component of that culture was an understanding of the past, a notion that contemporary society was fundamentally historical. That historical culture then formed an important part of what it meant to be 'Soviet.'

An historical culture has a number of elements. At the broadest level it simply indicates a culture that locates individuals and communities in time, that considers them as having a past that fundamentally shapes their present and future in one way or another. That culture can manifest itself in academic history, but more importantly it involves a broad diffusion of these historical conceptions of individuals and community through all of the forms, practices and institutions of social and cultural expression.

In examining stalinist society it is often difficult to distinguish *people* from *the people*, but it is not a problem that will be dealt with here. This paper deals solely with stalinist historical culture and the conception of a Soviet people that emerged from it. The contention is not that *people* saw themselves in such a way, but that the widely diffused historical culture was the medium *through* or *against* which people developed their own individual and community identities within the Soviet Union.

Chapter 1

THE WHIRLPOOL OF HISTORY

In Boris Pilnyak's The Naked Year there is a passage which portrays two Bolsheviks resting after a hard day of revolution discussing one of the eternal questions of Marxist-based theory and politics:

> That evening, in the hostel, after taking off his boots and kneading his toes with sweet pleasure and then clambering into bed on all fours, Yegor Sobachkin pored over the pamphlet by the light for a long while. Then he turned to his neighbor, buried in *Izvestia*:
>
> 'What do you think, Comrade Makarov, does existence determine life, or does the idea? Because if you think about it, there's existence in the idea.'[1]

This passage mirrors discussions that went on in all areas of Russian radical society both before and after the revolution. The relationship between ideas and existence, theory and practice, determinism and voluntarism, were not simply abstract academic issues, but had immediate and crucial implications for individuals and society.

The issues raised in this brief passage are numerous. The distinction Sobachkin draws between 'existence' and 'idea' corresponds roughly to the Marxist distinction between base and superstructure. The problem faced by radicals was in determining the relationship between the two and the ways in which existence and idea, base and superstructure, interacted and gave shape to individual lives. Ultimately the question was one of action: to what extent, if at all, can political and social action bring about changes in existence, ideas, and forms of life. This question tormented the Bolsheviks and other radicals throughout their history, in the process shaping their views *on* history.

---

[1] Boris Pilnyak, The Naked Year (Ann Arbor, 1975 [1920]).

The ways in which Pilnyak approached the question were complex and varied. As an adherent of the Scythian movement he conceived of Russia as a semi-Asiatic nation, and of the revolution as a rebirth of a primal Slavic soul. In general his sympathies lay with the countryside and the peasant rather than the city and the worker. That dichotomy was generally formulated as 'consciousness' versus 'spontaneity' and formed a crucial point of contention in Soviet thought and society. However, his abstract and somewhat mystical beliefs soon came into conflict with the society that was taking shape around him. While the questions that he pondered were common to his time, his solutions were ultimately unsatisfactory to the powers that took control. The relationship between *his* ideas and life, as for countless others, was resolved in 1937 with death.[2]

---

[2] Ibid. For discussions of Pilnyak's life and thought see Alexander Tulloch, 'Afterword' in ibid., pp. 186-204 and Edward Brown, Russian Literature Since the Revolution (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 77-86. Katerina Clark, 'The City versus the Countryside in Soviet Peasant Literature of the Twenties: A Duel of Utopias,' in Abbott Gleason, et al, eds., Bolshevik Culture, (Bloomington, 1985), pp. 178-182 discusses Scythianism, the spontaneity/consciousness dialectic during the 1920's and the place of Pilnyak in the debates. Pilnyak's

The questions raised by Pilnyak and his contemporaries were related to those of history and identity at a fundamental level. In Marxist, Leninist and Stalinist theory, the study of history provided a privileged vantage point from which to examine and understand society. The nature of the life of the people within that society (their identity) and changes that had and would occur were bound up with that historical understanding. The paradox inherent in this was that if, at a fundamental level, there is a necessary movement based on class struggle which drives history, then what impact or role could ideas (i.e., discussing, theorizing, reading, writing) about history have on the process of change?

This problematic was never resolved in Marx's work, and any attempt to do so is far beyond the scope of this paper. What I will consider are certain Marxian concepts relating to history and identity. In general much of Marx's 'system' of thought was contradictory, contingent and limited, often deliberately or necessarily so. Rather than trying to present a 'real' picture of the world and propose a universal social system, his thought was an attempt to provide a comprehensive way in which to *think about* the world that would then enable one to change it. "More than any other thinker, Marx was sensitive to the ideological implications of any conception of history which claimed the status of a 'realistic' vision of

---

exact fate is unknown, but the Shorter Literary Encyclopedia gives 1937 as the year of his death.

the world."[3] This sensitivity was not present in the stalinist conceptual universe.

The fundamental understanding through which Marx conceptualized all society, past, present and future, was that of the base and the superstructure. The base consists of the means of production, the material world within which and through which individuals produce and reproduce their means of existence. The resulting relations of production determine the superstructure, the various types of society within which people live and work and which reflect the particular organization of the means of production of that society.

The superstructure is thus determined by the base at a fundamental level, but this does not mean that the material world determines each individual's mental processes. It provides the context within which and through which consciousness arises and acts. The problem is that in all hitherto existing societies there has been a lack of congruity between base and superstructure. The contradictions which have always existed within specific societies mean that consciousness could never rise above its particular conditions and comprehend the world as it really is in its totality.[4]

---

[3] Hayden White, Metahistory (Baltimore, 1973), p. 40. White's analysis of Marx is very useful for my purposes in that he engages in a textual analysis of Marx's writings, setting aside considerations of the rightness or wrongness of his work. This in a sense is my approach to Stalinist historical culture and identity: I am looking at the internal functioning of that culture and the ways in which it created and deployed meaning.

The result of these social contradictions has been a lack of freedom and a consiousness or identity that is limited or false. Marx criticizes non-materialist history on the grounds that it "is all a history of religion and states,"[5] a projection of these false identities onto the past. The task of history is "to establish the truth of the here and now."[6] Materialist history allows us to begin to apprehend the true course of human events, to strip away the illusory identities that are the products of particular modes of production.

The problem with this view was alluded to earlier. If all ideas, including historical thought and writing, are fundamentally conditioned by the particular modes of production, then how are we to understand Marx's conception of history? There is in this respect a certain hubris built into

---

[4] As Hayden White argues, this model of analysis runs through all of Marx's work. The base provides the objective content of society, while the superstructure consists of the ways in which people and societies understand themselves. The discussion of the contradictions between objective and subjective (content and form in White's description) are what drives Marx's analysis. Ibid., pp. 285-297. References to base and superstructure run throughout Marx's work. The best short summary is in 'The German Ideology' in David McLellan, ed., Karl Marx: Selected Writings, pp. 160-168. All references to Marx's work will be from this volume.

[5] Marx, 'Grundrisse,' p. 358.

[6] Marx, 'Towards a Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*: Introduction' [1844], p. 64. I have used quotes from both the early and later Marx to demonstrate the unity of his thought on these issues. White, op. cit., p. 285 discusses the consistency of the underlying structure of Marx's thought throughout his work.

Marxian history. History progresses, enabling those at a higher stage of development to gain a deeper understanding of societies at lower stages than they may have had of themselves: the historian can dispel some of the illusory identities through which earlier societies understood themselves. "The social structure and the State are continually evolving out of the life-process of definite individuals, but of individuals, not as they may appear in their own or other people's imagination, but *as they really are*."[7] This understanding of things as they 'really are' refers to the fact that "consciousness must be explained rather from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social productive forces and the relations of production,"[8] and not from the perspective of consciousness.

This hubris is common to most western historiography. The assumption is that we are the pinnacle of historical development and can understand past societies better or more objectively than they could themselves. However, there is also a humility built into Marx's thought that tempers his hubris. The particular historical relations of production condition *all* aspects of society and consciousness, which includes the theorist or historian writing about past, present or future. There is no position *outside* of society from which to examine it, that notion being one of the faults of traditional non-materialist (what Marx calls idealist) history.[9]

---

[7] Marx, 'The German Ideology,' p. 164 (my italics). See also White, op. cit., p. 304-306 for a discussion of this point.

[8] Marx, 'Preface to *A Critique of Political Economy*,' p. 390.

Once this proposition is accepted historians can no longer be seen as speaking from a neutral and objective position, nor can their knowledge give more than a partial and local view of universal conditions. They, like everyone else, are conditioned by their position in relation to the class struggle. "In this precise sense, 'class struggle doesn't exist,' since 'there is no element that eludes it'--we cannot apprehend it 'as such;' what we are dealing with are always the partial effects whose absent cause is the class struggle."[10] "In [Marx's] work, the theory and practice of historical reflection are intimately linked to the theory and practice of the society in which they arose."[11]

The partial and contingent nature of historical knowledge is a result of the continued existence of class differentiation. Only in a society in which all class contradictions have been resolved can absolute historical knowledge be possible. Under capitalism, for example, identity is fundamentally shaped by the class struggle between the proletariat, bourgeoisie and residual elements of older classes. This leads to a variety of identities which mask class consciousness, the most notable of which are national identities.[12]

---

[9] See Marx, 'The German Ideology,' pp. 173-176, 'Grundrisse,' p. 358 and 'The Holy Family,' p. 147 for various views on this point.

[10] Slavoj Zizek, The Metastases of Enjoyment, (London, 1994), pp. 156.

[11] White, op. cit., p. 40.

As capitalism develops it becomes inexorably an international free-trade system which "breaks up old nationalities and pushes the antagonism of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie to the extreme point."[13] At this point the final resolution of the class struggle will occur, all class distinctions will disappear, and communism will arise. Only then will a 'world-historical' society and individual come on the scene, one which is universal and in which false or partial consciousness is replaced by universal consciousness. In this society non-universal identities such as nationality will lose their ideological hold over people and true freedom will develop. This allows Marx to claim that bourgeois society "brings...the prehistory of human society to a close."[14] Universal, true history can only be the product of a world-historical society.[15]

---

[12] Marx, 'The Holy Family,' pp. 147-148, 'The German Ideology,' pp. 161-168.

[13] Marx, 'Speech on Free Trade,' p. 270. See also 'The Communist Manifesto,' pp. 224-229.

[14] Marx, 'Preface to *A Critique of Political Economy*,' p. 390.

Until the advent of this world-historical society Marx insisted upon the necessity for a careful study of the particular material conditions of specific societies in any historical analysis. While history develops according to universal rules our particular positions only allow a limited understanding of them, and thus we cannot generalize except on the basis of careful study.

These points are made strongly in the few references he makes to Russia, most notably in his letter to Vera Zasulich.[16] In the letter he simply states that his analyses given in Capital refer solely to western Europe and should not be generalized beyond that context.[17] In the drafts he emphasizes the unique status of the commune in Russia, giving a brief overview of its place in society and its uncertain future prospects: "To save the Russian commune, a Russian revolution is necessary."[18]

The possibility of a Russian revolution preceding a

---

[15] See White, op. cit., pp. 311-313 for a discussion of these issues.

[16] Marx, 'Letter to Vera Sassoulitch [sic],' pp. 576-580. Zasulich had written to Marx asking his opinion on the peasant commune and its relationship to communism. His letter to her was brief and ambiguous, partly because of his uncertainty over the question. He had also composed lengthier drafts in which he made more extensive, if very tentative, comments that are quite revealing.

[17] Ibid., pp. 576-577 (Letter).

[18] Ibid., pp.577-580, quote pp. 580. Similar points are made in his 'Letter to Mikhailovsky,' pp. 571-572.

European one is also admitted in his last published writing, the preface to the Russian edition of the Communist Manifesto.[19] These references provided some inspiration to Russian radicals of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Lenin among them. However, among the Russian Marxists it was generally accepted that a world revolution would have to follow any Russian revolution for it to succeed, a position that was consistent with Marx's view of the formation of a world-historical society after the revolution.

Brief mention must be made of Lenin before turning to a consideration of Stalinist historical consciousness. The debate over Lenin's relationship to Marxism is long and too involved to discuss here, but a few points must be mentioned. By and large Lenin did not deviate from most of the fundamental principles of Marxian thought outlined above. He considered that revolution in Russia was possible, but that a world revolution would have to follow in order for communism to be reached. While supremely confident in his ideas and abilities, he was willing to change both his views and his tactics when necessary. Ultimately he did not hold his own positions to be absolutely correct, nor did he do the same for Marx's views. As he stated after the Revolution: "For me, theory is only a hypothesis, not the Holy Scripture; it is a tool in our daily work."[20]

---

[19] Marx, 'Preface to the Russian edition of the *Communist Manifesto*,' p. 584.

Beginning with the notion of the 'weakest link,' whereby the Russian Revolution was seen as the precursor and instigator of world revolution, to his continual emphasis on mundane matters such as the formation of a national newspaper, Lenin's innovations were primarily at the level of strategy and tactics. Regardless of the changes he introduced, the underlying spirit of Marxian thought outlined above was maintained. Specific knowledge based on the historical examination of a particular society was the only way in which to determine the actions that needed to be taken. For Lenin, the correct interpretation of history could be found in Marx, but at the level of strategy and tactics changes could and should be made, a view that was endorsed by Marx.[21]

Lenin's death and the rise of Stalin to power brought about fundamental changes that entirely altered Marxian conceptions of history and identity. Again the arguments over the connection between Lenin and Stalin are endless and not worth going over here. What I will do is analyze some of the major Stalinist innovations and their subsequent canonical formulations.

---

[20] Quoted in Ronald Clark, Lenin: The Man Behind the Mask, (London, 1988), p. 86.

[21] Marx's acceptance of the possibility of a Russian revolution preceding one in Europe was just one example of this. Leonard Schapiro and Peter Reddaway, eds., Lenin: The Man, the Theorist, the Leader, (New York, 1967) provides a good (if somewhat dated) discussion of Lenin from numerous perspectives. Various aspects of Lenin's thought and work will be brought up throughout the paper in relation to specific issues.

During the late 1920's and into the early 1930's a number of positions on history and identity that had been put forward by a variety of scholars and political or cultural figures began to coalesce around Stalin and his quest for absolute leadership over the USSR. One of the key elements of this new conceptual universe was the notion that socialism in one country was possible.[22] This negated the Marxist notion of the world-historical, in which only the final resolution of the class struggle at a universal level would enable a truly free individual and society (i.e., communism) to emerge.

The notion of socialism in one country needed a new conception of knowledge to buttress its position. If in Marxian thought it is only in a world-historical society that we are able to act or apprehend the world from a universal perspective, then socialism in one country would not allow for absolute knowledge (Truth). By the mid-1930's this problem had been resolved by placing language and technology outside of the base/superstructure relationship. Language was seen as a national or ethnic attribute which was fundamentally unchanging.[23] This went against the Marxian view of language which held that it was the tangible expression of consciousness, a product of the base/superstructure relationship.[24]

---

[22] J. Stalin, 'The Foundations of Leninism,' [1924] pp. 37-38 and 'On the Problems of Leninism,' [1926] pp. 156-166, both in Problems of Leninism, (Moscow, 1947). In the first publication of 'The Foundations of Leninism,' he denied the possibility of socialism in one country; however, this was deleted from later publications. See Robert Tucker, Stalin as Revolutionary, (New York, 1973), p. 371, and pp. 377-389 for a general overview of the development of the concept. Stephen F. Cohen, 'Bolshevism and Stalinism' in Tucker, ed., Stalinism, (New York, 1977), pp. 21-22 emphasizes the Bukharinite roots of the formulation, while Robert McNeal, 'Trotskyist Interpretations of Stalinism' in ibid., discusses the major Soviet opposition to socialism in one country during the 1920's and early 1930's.

Technology was likewise conceived of as a neutral phenomenon, one which was not determined by the relations of production prevailing in a particular society. For Marx technology in itself was an objective element of the means of production, however the specific development of technology and our apprehension of it is rooted in the particular moment of the class struggle. To continue Zizek's earlier thought, "[i]n the Stalinist discursive universe, on the contrary, class struggle *does* exist, since there is an exception to it: technology and language are conceived of as neutral instruments at the diposal of everybody and, as such, external to class struggle."[25]

---

[23] Klaus Mehnert, Stalin versus Marx, (London, 1951), pp. 29-30, 49-56, Max K. Adler, Marxist Linguistic Theory and Communist Practice, (Hamburg, 1980), pp. 59-76. While the change in the conception of language and nation occurred during the mid-1930's it was only in 1950 that Stalin gave the definitive statement of these views, changing the official theoretical line. See Joseph Stalin, Marxism and Linguistics, (New York, 1951).

[24] In 'The German Ideology,' p. 167 Marx describes language as arising along with consciousness and, like consciousness, being determined by the relations of production.

[25] Zizek, op. cit., p. 156.

The effects of these conceptual changes can be seen in a variety of areas of life. In architecture, for example, the battles of the 1920's and early 1930's over style pitted modernists (especially constructivists) against classisists.[26] One of the protagonists in this struggle was Viktor Vesnin, the pre-eminent Constructivist, who in 1931 described the conflict over the design of the Palace of Soviets in terms of language: "The Palace of Soviets should be a monument to our glorious era, a monument which can only be expressed in the language of that era. Classical forms, however perfect they may be, are in the language of the past and cannot express the present."[27] In the Constructivist view the new social forms which arose after the revolution led to, and required, a new architectural language. They rejected classical architecture not solely on aesthetic grounds, but on the grounds that it was not (as is implied by Classicism) an eternal or objectively perfect expression of artistic spirit. The stalinist conception of language, on the other hand, rejected the Constructivist postition and, in architecture along with language, accepted the Classicist view.

In terms of history and identity the changes in the conception of language were of primary importance. The nation, previously seen as an identity derived from the social organization of the period of the transition to full-blown capitalism, became a 'real' or absolute identity founded on language. History could thereby consider the nation as an historical actor with a role independent of the development of the class struggle. In addition, placing language outside of the base/superstructure relationship provided a neutral ground from which to develop a true and universal historical vision. Or, in Stalin's tautological formulation, "[t]he base produces the superstructure so that it can serve the base."[28] The Marxian problem of historical knowledge was overcome, and socialism in one country was put on a solid foundation.

---

[26] The constructivists were not necessarily Marxists in a strict sense, but they certainly shared Marx's rejection of essentialist or universalist ontologies and epistemologies.

[27] Quoted in Alexei Tarkhanov and Sergei Kavtaradze, Stalinist Architecture, (London, 1992), p. 27.

The Short Course

The canonical work in stalinist historiography, and indeed, it can be argued, in stalinist society as a whole, was the History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks): Short Course, generally referred to simply as the Short Course.[29] It was written partly in response to the decree on the teaching of history, and was intended to give the definitive interpretation of Party history. This reflected the general trend in society to codify and institutionalize the massive changes which had been instituted during the late 1920's and early 1930's.[30] The new trend towards stability went along with the claim that socialism had been successfully implemented, and that society had now embarked on the road to communism.[31]

---

[28] Stalin, Marxism and Linguistics, (New York, 1951).

[29] History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks): Short Course, edited by a commission of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(B.), (New York, 1939). I will refer to it as the Short Course.

The Short Course provided not only the official history of the Party but a crucial element in the legitimization of the Soviet state as a whole. The publishing history of the work gives an indication of the importance given to it by the government.[32] Originally published in *Pravda* and *Bolshevik*, it was soon published in book form.[33] This was accompanied by a huge media blitz, with articles appearing daily describing how people were reading and learning from the new history.[34] Between 1938 and 1953 it was published 301 times in 67 languages, for a total of 42,816,000 copies.[35]

---

[30] Other major examples would be the Stalin constitution of 1936, the call for intensive rather than extensive industrial development, and the establishment of 'socialist realism' as the only form of artistic expression.

[31] The details of this are elaborated in chapter 12 of the Short Course, pp. 331-352.

[32] Abram Tertz [Andrei Sinyavskii], On Socialist Realism, (New York, 1960), pp. 33-36 gives a vivid description of the release of the Short Course.

[33] Chapter 1 appeared in *Pravda* on Sept. 9, 1938, followed by an additional chapter (2 on Sept. 13) on each of the next 10 days.

[34] The daily articles continued for well over a month after the initial publication, gradually tapering off, although they continued to appear for months afterwards. Typical examples include a notice on Sept. 21, p. 2 announcing the initial publication in book form of 100,000 copies in the Armenian

Originally there was no authorial attribution for the Short Course aside from the statement 'edited by a commission of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(B.).'[36] It is now known that of the editorial commission two people led the creation of the work: P.N. Pospelov, the Secretary of the commission, and Emelian Iaroslavskii, who wrote most of the text.[37] It was then read and altered significantly by Stalin, who changed a variety of chapter headings, made textual corrections, and most notably wrote the section on dialectical and historical materialism.[38] Soon after the release of the book Stalin began to be credited with having written larger parts of the work, until in 1946 he was falsely

---

language, and a picture of people reading the history on Sept. 27, p. 2 accompanied by the heading 'Preparation for the deep study of the History of the CPSU(b).'

[35] Figures given N.N. Maslov, '*Short Course of the History of the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik)*--An Encyclopedia of Stalin's Personality Cult' in Soviet Studies in History (1989-1990), p. 42. Bertram D. Wolfe, 'Party Histories from Lenin to Krushchev' in John Keep, ed., Contemporary History in the Soviet Mirror, (London, 1964), p. 51 gives the number as "more than 50,000,000 copies in the Soviet Union," although he does not give a reference for his figure.

[36] The use of brigades of authors or artists was common in stalinist society, a tendency that will be discussed in other contexts as well.

[37] George M. Enteen, 'Writing Party History in the USSR: the Case of E.M. Iaroslavskii' in Journal of Contemporary History 21 (1986), pp. 321-322.

[38] Maslov, op. cit., pp. 49-50.

declared to have been the author of the whole work.[39] Ultimately it provided the model not only for any portrayal of the Party in any medium, but it also served in a more general sense as the model for all portrayals of any history.

The section on dialectical and historical materialism became the canonical formulation of Bolhevik thought, laying out the nature and importance of history in Soviet society.[40] In it Stalin claims that "the science of the history of society, despite all the complexity of the phenomena of social life, can become as precise a science as, let us say, biology, and capable of making use of the laws of development of society for practical purposes."[41] The theoretical innovations on which stalinist history were based are stated clearly here. No longer is historical inquiry subject to the limitations imposed by the historian's position in relation to the class struggle. Through history one can apprehend the

---

[39] The Short Course was projected to be volume XV of Stalin's official Sochineniia [Works], although the collection never went beyond volume XIII, cut off by Khrushchev's campaign against the cult of personality. See Robert McNeal Stalin's Works. An Annotated Bibliography. (Stanford, 1967), p. 158.

[40] Short Course, chapter 4, section 2, pp. 105-131. See also Maslov, op. cit., p. 50. This section was published and distributed separately, as well as being included in Stalin, Problems of Leninism. This collection of Stalin's writings and speeches was perhaps the second most significant document of the period. While it never approached the numbers of the Short Course, by 1949 17 million copies of Problems of Leninism in 52 languages had been published, making it one of the key texts of the Stalin era. See Robert Tucker, Stalin in Power, (New York, 1990), pp. 161-162.

[41] Short Course, p. 114.

Truth. This is then wedded to the Marxian notion of historical laws or stages of development to provide an infallible guide to action. The only issue left unresolved is who can understand the science of the history of society.

In the schema laid out by Stalin, history moves through five stages: primitive communal, slave, feudal, capitalist, and socialist.[42] The process of development is partly spontaneous, but change based on the blind workings of the class struggle only goes so far. Then "[t]he spontaneous process of development yields place to the conscious actions of men, peaceful development to violent upheaval, evolution to revolution."[43] The spontaneous masses are, in this formulation, led into revolution by the conscious leadership, the group that properly understands the laws of historical development. In the transition from capitalism to socialism that group was represented by the vanguard party, namely the Bolsheviks.

The notion of the vanguard party was a Leninist innovation. In What is to be Done?, the key work in this regard, Lenin set out the program for a properly revolutionary party. In the Russian case, where the proletariat was relatively small, a theoretically conscious leadership was needed to push the proletariat, who otherwise would not become revolutionary, into action.[44] However, while he placed a great deal of importance on the vanguard party, he saw its role as the facilitation of revolution through a variety of means. It was crucial, especially in the conditions of autocracy and oppression prevailing in Russia, but was *not* the locus of the revolution. That could only lie within the proletariat as a class.[45]

---

[42] Ibid., pp. 123-126.

[43] Ibid., p. 130.

In the Short Course Stalin takes these Leninist innovations one step further. Rather than a facilitator or initiator of revolution the Party becomes the locus of revolution. This is based on the possibility of the absolute historical knowledge which is now in the hands of the party. Throughout his discussion of dialectical and historical materialism, and in fact throughout the Short Course, the proletariat plays almost no active role. He states that "the party of the proletariat should not guide itself in its practical activity by casual motives, but by the laws of development of society, and by practical deduction from these laws."[46] These "new social ideas and theories force their way through, become the possession of the masses, mobilize and organize them against the moribund forces of society, and thus facilitate the overthrow of those forces which hamper the development of the material life of society."[47] The 'new social ideas and theories,' which are developed by the Party, are the motor that drives the proletariat. They are there as a reason or justification for the actions of the party, and as a medium through which the party acts, but they have no life of their own.

---

[44] V.I. Lenin, What Is To Be Done?, (New York, 1969), pp. 30-34.

[45] Ibid., pp. 78-79, 109-111, 122-124, 133-136, 168-171. In The State and Revolution, (New York, 1932), written in the context of 1917, Lenin places much greater emphasis on the spontaneous development of the revolution and plays down the role of the vanguard party. See especially pp. 78-85.

[46] Short Course, p. 115.

By placing the party at the centre of the revolutionary movement, as the bearer of true historical understanding, it therefore becomes the only legitimate leader of society. The Leninist emphasis on the importance of the vanguard is here combined with a strict Marxist determinism that creates a totalizing conception of history and of the party.

In an earlier section of the Short Course the organizational principles of a marxist party are laid out. This passage describes the connection between the party and the masses in two ways. The first is that "[t]he Party is an *embodiment of the connection* of the vanguard of the working class with the *working class millions*."[48] Here the party is an historically constituted entity that is objectively the leading segment of the working class, itself the most advanced class in capitalist society. In this view party and proletariat are identical in the sense that both are objects of historical analysis that, at a fundamental level, are the *bearers* of revolution.

---

[47] Ibid., p. 117.

[48] Ibid., p. 48 (italics in original).

In the second part of this description the voice shifts from that of an objective historian applying marxian concepts to describe the past to that of a leader calling for action: "the Party must multiply its connections with the masses and win the confidence of the millions of its class."[49] This presents the party as an historical *actor* that must maintain its position as the leading edge of the working class in order to *create* the Revolution.

By collapsing the distinction between the two aspects of the Party the Short Course sets up the foundations for a circular conception of party history. Any party action is necessarily justified by its objectively preeminent position, while that position is and was created by the conscious, heroic action of the party. In this description of the role of the party the distinction between object and subject, past and present is effaced. The party has two sides: one is as the embodiment of the working class, the other is as the leader of the working class. The party thus contains and is contained by history and society. Historians get their authority by virtue of their position in or in relation to the Party. Stalin, as leader of the party, is thus also the leading historian of the Party.

This conception of the Party places history, and especially party history, in a culturally privileged position. It serves as the foundation for the authority and legitimacy of party, state and social order, as well as providing the justification for any and all party actions. In this sense the historical culture becomes foundational for identity in an even more powerful sense than is implied by western historical culture. The past-present-future axis is entirely party-dominated. Past and present are seen in terms of identity in that they both create/were created by the Party, while the (undefined) future is always already present in the past. Since the future that comes into being is undefined (that is, it never conforms to the predictions of past and present), past and present remain malleable, subject to change at any and all times.

---

[49] Ibid., p. 49.

The Stalinist conception of history described here is fundamentally different from western historical consciousness. In western historiography there is a sort of triangular organization of the historical field. At one point is the historian, at another the past, and at a third contemporary society. While the debates over the connections between past and present, past and historian, and historian and present society are contentious and endless, in general it can be said that western historiography is founded on a division of roles between the three points. Past, present and historian are three distinct entities that must remain apart, a separation that in western historiography enables the historian to claim the objectivity and distance that gives the profession (and by extension all of historical culture) its legitimacy and validity. This separation is present within historical texts, and is also institutionalized in the autonomous university.

The distinctions on which western historiography are based are ostensibly present in Stalinist historiography as well, a legacy of pre-revolutionary times, western influence, Marxist and Leninist traditions, and the practices of the 1920's. However, under Stalin they became more or less meaningless. As we have seen, according to the internal logic of the Short Course the distinctions between the three are largely effaced. The party, and ultimately Stalin, are actors in the past, shapers of the present, and historians who understand and apply the links between the two. Each of the positions legitimizes and reinforces the other two. Thus, in Stalinist historiography the form and impact of the historical narrative is fundamentally different from that put forward in western historical culture. This is reflected in the fundamental concept on which history was based: rather than the objectivity demanded in western historiography, *partiinost* became the goal towards which historians would strive.[50]

---

[50] Robert Byrnes, 'Creating the Soviet Historical Profession, 1917-1934' in Slavic Review, 50:2 (1991), pp. 307-308; John Barber, Soviet Historians in Crisis, 1928-1932, (New York, 1981), pp. 9-10. The historical conception outlined here was, as with western historiography, mirrored by the institutional setting in which it was written. This will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 2. *Partiinost* is roughly translated as 'party-mindedness,' making the Party the focus of any social examination or action.

The logic created by this conceptualization does not allow for any heterogeneity. If all Party action is entirely historically justified, then all that is left is to determine who is truly a member or supporter of the Party, both in the past and present. However, since the Party writes the history, the argument becomes circular, spiralling in towards the Party, and ultimately Stalin. Given the changes in history that arise as the future becomes present, no one is immune from falling into disfavour, with the exceptions of the Party and Stalin. The Party, which, according to the history written by the Party, is essentially Stalin, can never be wrong, only momentarily undermined or misled. This leads to a situation where there is a mirror image of the Party, namely the anti-Party. If the Party at a fundamental level *is identical with* all of the progressive forces and movements of history, then all that is not is anti-Party.[51]

The result of this was the rise of the notion of factionalism. In 1930 D. Ia. Kin introduced this concept into the Bolshevik historical debate, and it was later absorbed into the Stalinist conception of history. He held that the overcoming of factions within the working class movement as a whole and the Party in particular, not class struggle or international conflict, was the most important element in the Party's rise to power. The development of Bolshevism was seen in terms of a constant series of battles between 'true' and 'false' elements within the Party and the radical movement.[52]

---

[51] An interesting example of the way in which this functions is in the selection of items for Stalin's complete works. McNeal, Stalin's Works, pp. 15 and 115, mentions a number of letters that were included, but that gave no addressee. Citing one specific example, he speculates that those letters were written to people who were later purged, and whose identity could thus not be acknowledged. The possibility that Stalin could have written those letters is simply not possible, precluded by the party/anti-party dichotomy fundamental to the Stalinist conception of history. It also explains the systematic removal of the title of *tovarishch* from any references to purge victims in the Sochineniia (McNeal, p. 16).

Factionalism was enshrined in the Short Course as *the* way in which the Party developed.[53] The introduction lists a variety of factors that strengthened, tested and moulded the Party: first on the list is the fight against petty-bourgeois parties within the working class movement and against opportunists within the Party.[54] This tendency to see enemies everywhere, to treat any dissent as absolute treachery, is generally seen as a product of the paranoia and tyranny of Stalin.[55] However, this view bases a judgement of the Short Course on western historical conventions of objectivity. As we have seen, the Short Course was founded on a very different understanding of the meaning and function of history. It is only on those grounds that factionalism and other elements of that history can be understood.

---

[52] George Enteen, 'The Stalinist Conception of Communist Party History,' in Studies in Soviet Thought, 37 (1989), pp. 266-268. I am indebted to this article for inspiring and informing much of this discussion of the importance of factionalism. He discusses similar issues in 'Writing Party History in the USSR,' pp. 331-333. While Kin provided the formulation of factionalism in history, it had long existed in Bolshevik thought and practice in different forms. Sheila Fizpatrick, 'The Civil War as Formative Experience,' in Gleason, et al, eds, Bolshevik Culture, pp. 57-76; David Joravsky, 'Cultural Revolution and the Fortress Mentality,' in ibid., pp. 93-113; and Jeremy Paltiel, 'The Cult of Personality' in Studies in Comparative Communism, XVI:1&2 (1983) discuss the different ways in which the revolutionary experience developed a party culture which was prone to factionalism. Fitzpatrick, 'Culture and Politics under Stalin' in Slavic Review, 35:2 (1976), pp. 214-215 and Michael Fox, 'Political Culture, Purges, and Proletarianization at the Institute of Red Professors, 1921-1929' in Russian Review, 52:1 (1993), pp. 20-42 discuss the development of factionalism within the academic world, especially the Institute of Red Professors and the Communist Academy.

[53] Maslov, op. cit., pp. 46-47 claims that after seeing an early draft of the Short Course Stalin demanded that it be written in the spirit of factionalism, not in terms of a fight against external enemies or as a story of the development of the class struggle.

An example of factionalism early in the history of the Party provides us with a clear statement of its nature. The Second Party Congress in 1903 saw the development and widening of the split between the Bolshevik and Menshevik factions of the Party. In this struggle Plekhanov tried to take the position of conciliator and keep the party together. One of the primary points of contention was over the control of the editorial policy of *Iskra*, the Social Democratic newspaper.[56] When the Mensheviks took control of the paper, "*Iskra* became a weapon in the fight against Lenin and the Bolsheviks," who were of course the true Party. Not only did this factional split occur, but Plekhanov was also sucked in.

---

[54] Short Course, p. 1.

[55] For example, Tucker, Stalin in Power, pp. 533-539 discusses "The *Short Course* as Autobiography" (p. 533). In his view it was primarily a work of historical deception. The purges as thus in part an attempt to purify the collective memory, "[s]ince people who had in their minds a different view of the party's and Stalin's past could pass it on to the newcomers, their very presence in the party and among the citezenry would be subversive." (p. 537)

[56] Short Course, pp. 39-46.

> Plekhanov could not stick to his position as an advocate of conciliation, and soon he too joined the campaign. This was bound to happen by the very logic of things: whoever insists on a conciliatory attitude towards opportunists is bound to sink to opportunism himself.[57]

This passage points to the problems with viewing stalinist history simply as lies. Finding oppositional activity everywhere was not simply a result of the paranoid rewriting of history, but was due to the structure of the historical narrative: it was embedded in the ways in which history was conceived and written. As we have seen, stalinist history did not distinguish between past and present, subject and object, statement and action. This led to a situation where *any* non-compliance, past or present, active or passive, became opposition. All oppositionists, regardless of their positions on various issues, were essentially the same. As well, their opposition necessarily led to the same end.

> It cannot be regarded as an accident that the Trotskyites, Bukharinites and nationalist deviators who fought Lenin and the Party ended just as the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary parties did, namely, by becoming agents of fascist espionage services, by turning spies, wreckers, assassins, diversionists and traitors to the country.[58]

---

[57] Ibid., p. 45.

[58] Ibid., p. 360. Political differences are moot. For example, "[i]t was easy to see" that the Right opposition "differed from the bloc of Trotskyites and Zinovievite capitulators only in form," not in content. (p. 294)

Any opposition could only lead to alliance with any and all opponents of the Party. The "very logic of things" that necessarily led Plekhanov astray lay in the construction of the stalinist historical narrative.

The logic of factionalism is the flip side of the history of the Party. In the Short Course the Party is portrayed as *containing* all of history. This conception then implies that the greatest threats to the Party and the revolution came not from without, but from within. In the same way that Stalin and the Party became identical with all of the progressive forces of history, Trotsky became the figure that represented all the forces of reaction and opposition, past and present.[59]

The notion of factionalism thus becomes something other than the day to day practical defense of the Party. The Short Course states that "[t]*he Party strengthens itself by purging its ranks of opportunist elements*--that is one of the maxims of the Bolshevik Party."[60] Historical description gives way to a command. Rather than a contingent element of the specific events in the history of the party, the fight against factionalism becomes a necessary and fundamental feature of the party. The maxim given above is thus a necessity that must be carried out, no matter what the situation.

---

[59] Enteen, 'Writing Party History in the USSR,' pp. 330-332.

[60] Short Course., p. 142.

The fight against factionalism was also strengthened by the stalinist view of class. The locus of progressive class consciousness was moved from the proletariat as a whole to the Party. As a result, the working class movement in a sense no longer required a working class. This was also the case with other classes. As Sheila Fitzpatrick puts it, "[i]t was one of Stalin's unique contributions to Marxist theory to discover that when social classes are destroyed, the class consciousness of their surviving members may become even stronger."[61] This innovation did away with the necessity for antagonistic classes. The class struggle could be declared solved, while simultaneously the fight against factions could take on a new urgency and ruthlessness.

The factional view of history was strengthened and codified in a series of epithets and symbols. Stalin was represented as father-figure, saint, light, hero (*bogatyr'*), etc., while Trotsky was double-dealer, wrecker, spy, saboteur, Jew, etc. These words and symbols were a sort of short-hand way of describing the various historical processes described above. As we shall see, they became standard ways for describing historical figures in all periods and situations. They provided a way in which historical events and figures could be related to Stalin and Trotsky, the two figures that dominated all of history, and their places in the historical narrative.[62]

---

[61] Sheila Fitzpatrick, Stalin's Peasants, (Oxford, 1994), p. 249.

A final aspect of the stalinist conception of history was the use of genealogy in the discussion of historical actors and events. The various symbols and epithets used to describe historical figures served to give them their place in the stalinist moral order. Genealogy served a similar purpose, linking events and people to those that went before, and to those that came after. Thus, the genealogy of revolution given in the Short Course included the revolutions of 1905, February, 1917, and October, 1917.[63] The use of genealogy became one of the notable features of stalinist historical culture.

The overall conception of history given in the Short Course can be likened to a whirlpool. Stalin and the Party were always and necessarily at the centre of history, with other figures and events circling around and gaining their meaning solely in relation to them. Stalin was the only stable figure in the historical universe, the only one who was *identical* with all that was progressive. The fact that his position shifted constantly did not impact on his position in the historical narrative. Rather, specific history changed, with the narrative maintaining Stalin at the stable centre of the whirlpool.

---

[62] See Katerina Clark, The Soviet Novel, pp. 57-63 for a discussion of bolshevik epithets.

[63] Short Course, p. 1.

Chapter 2

THE MAKING OF HISTORY

The conception of history found in the Short Course provided the model or template for the presentation of all history in all media in stalinist society. However, as is evident from the brief discussion in the introduction, a 'conception of history' is very different from an 'historical culture.' The latter implies a society that conceives of itself in historical terms, and in which 'history' in a variety of forms is an important element throughout the society.

Historical culture involves a host of institutions, practices, and forms of expression, a diversity that cannot be adequately covered here. However, an indication of some of the ways in which that culture functioned is possible. This chapter will look first at the development of the discipline of history at an academic level, as well as its place in a broader social movement towards mass literacy and education. This can serve as an example of one of the ways in which the institutions of stalinist society developed, as well as an introduction to a number of the historical issues and debates that will be discussed later.

The second part of the chapter is devoted to an examination of the socialist realist aesthetic, the official form of cultural expression, and its relationship to history.

This will give some indications of the ways in which, and through which, stalinist historical culture functioned, and of the extent to which it permeated society. It will also give a better understanding of the ways in which the stalinist conception of history functioned and was mapped onto society as a whole.

History in History

The institution in which 'history' is explored most deeply and explicitly is, of course, in the academic discipline of history. The development of the discipline was an often confusing process that encompassed a wide variety of divergent views, rapid change and expansion, frequent government intervention, and finally a settling of accounts and a gradual codification and institutionalization of historical practice during the 1930's. The specifics of historical interpretation that were worked out in the discipline of history were then were taken up in schools and other educational establishments, as well as forming the basis for a broader cultural understanding of history.

The pre-revolutionary empire had produced a number of good historians (primarily, but not exclusively, Russians), but in general the academic discipline of history had been small. From the time of Karamzin up to the revolution 'history' had been widely discussed and formed an important part of Russian culture.[1] However, it had been primarily literary and artistic figures, from Pushkin to Tolstoy and Tchaikovskii, who had shaped the Russian historical imagination. Ukrainian nationalism, led by such figures as the poet Shevchenko, was also deeply historically based. Academic history had begun to develop more seriously in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but in 1917 there were still fewer than 200 trained historians in the Empire, most teaching in the institutions where they had studied and having little contact with other institutions. Fewer than ten of them were Bolsheviks.[2] In general the government paid little attention to history, intervening only to prevent any politically active figures from teaching. These included everyone from the liberal Miliukov to the Bolshevik Pokrovskii.[3]

The revolution threw the discipline of history into confusion. Educational institutions were disrupted, iconoclastic policies and practices led to the destruction or attempted destruction of many of the resources used by historians, and a significant number of academics fled the country.[4] The historians who stayed behind concentrated their energies on saving what they could, primarily the archival materials and libraries scattered throughout the country. In this they were largely supported by the Party, and especially Lenin, who tried to limit and direct the more destructive currents unleashed by the revolution. In general, historians of all stripes were tolerated, with the government concentrating its limited resources on creating a variety of Marxist institutions and groups that could then counter the established scholars.[5]

---

[1] Nicholai Karamzin was a writer who, in addition to his novels, wrote the first widely popular histories of the Russian state, emphasizing the importance of the autocracy in its formation and continued strength.

[2] Byrnes, 'Creating the Soviet Historical Profession,' p. 297.
Barber, Soviet Historians in Crisis, 1928-1932, p. 13, goes so far as as to say that Pokrovskii was the only true professional historian who was a Bolshevik.

[3] C.E. Black, 'History and Politics in the Soviet Union,' in Black, ed., Rewriting Russian History, (London, 1957), p. 4-5.

During the 1920's this policy became the norm. History retained its importance in the overall academic and ideological spheres; however, it was abolished as a separate discipline.[6] Especially under the auspices of the Socialist Academy (in 1924 changed to the Communist Academy (CA)) the Bolsheviks attempted to develop a systematic and integrated social sciences.[7] This took place in a context of relatively open debate. Lenin's policy towards bourgeois specialists, summed up in the slogan of 'building communism with non-communist hands,' was to accommodate non-Marxists who, given the small number of Bolshevik specialists, were necessary in order to keep the country running.[8] In history Mikhail Pokrovskii, the dean of official Soviet history until his death in 1932, strongly supported the right of non-Marxists to practice history, only changing his position after the massive political shifts that began in 1928.[9]

---

[4] Konstantin Shteppa, Russian Historians and the Soviet State, (New Brunswick, NJ, 1962), p. 16, estimates that around 20 percent of historians died during the revolution and its immediate aftermath, some killed by the Cheka or 'bandits,' others dying from the privations brought on by revolution and civil war.

[5] Byrnes, 'Creating the Soviet Historical Profession,' pp. 298-300; Alexander Vucinich, Empire of Knowledge, (Berkeley, 1984), pp. 91-95; Richard Stites, 'Iconoclastic Currents in the Russian Revolution: Destroying and Preserving the Past,' in Gleason et al, eds., Bolshevik Culture, pp. 1-24.

[6] In elementary and secondary schools the new social studies teachers were generally the old history teachers. Sheila Fitzpatrick, Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921-1934, (Cambridge, 1979), p. 37.

The changes that the Party attempted to implement in history focussed on persuasion and gradual institutional change rather than intellectual bullying, a necessary policy given the almost total lack of Bolshevik scholars. They directed most funding and attention to predominantly Marxist institutions such as the CA and the Institute of Red Professors (IKP), seeking to develop a solid core of Marxist scholars that could gradually replace the non-Marxists who still dominated the scene.[10] In this they were partly successful, although there were still a large number of historians who continued to hold 'bourgeois' views into the 1930's.

---

[7] Vucinich, Empire of Knowledge, pp. 87-89. The search for a unification of the sciences as a whole continued through the 1930's, although with the ascent of scientists such as T. D. Lysenko the quest took on a surreal quality that was very different from the utopian ideals that underlay the efforts of the 1920's. See ibid., pp. 149-166 for a discussion of the issue in the 1930's.

[8] Fitzpatrick, Education and Social Mobility, pp. 9-10 discusses this policy in relation to academia as a whole.

[9] George Enteen, The Soviet Scholar-Bureaucrat: M.N. Pokrovskii and the Society of Marxist Historians, (University Park, 1978), pp. 75-78. After 1928 he became increasingly hostile to non-Marxist historians, largely going along with the changes instituted during the cultural revolution of the late 1920's and early 1930's. (pp. 88-89)

One of the major problems the Bolsheviks saw in pre-revolutionary institutions of higher learning was the elitism that prevailed due to financial and class obstacles to admission. In the early 1920's a number of more utopian proposals called for the total abolition of tuition, admissions requirements, grades and other such bourgeois requirements.[11] Some of these proposals were partially implemented, although Lenin and the Bolshevik leadership pragmatically maintained many of the old institutions and practices.[12]

The biggest change came in offering preferential admission to workers and setting up workers' faculties (*rabfaks*) which were designed to give workers the skills necessary to enter the various institutions of higher learning (VUZy).[13] They were highly popular among workers and the Party, as "[i]n no other type of school did the students have so clear a sense of 'Soviet' identity and of their own responsibilities in the building of socialism."[14] These efforts were relatively successful, with the percentage of workers in VUZy increasing from 15 to 26 percent between 1923 and 1928.[15] Historians in the VUZy and in historical societies, especially the Society of Marxist Historians, also attempted to develop popular historical knowledge through the sponsorship of meetings and discussion throughout the country.[16]

---

[10] Fox, op. cit., pp. 32-33.

[11] James C. McClelland, 'The Utopian and the Heroic: Divergent Paths to the Communist Educational Ideal,' in Gleason, et al, eds., Bolshevik Culture, pp. 114-130.

[12] This was especially the case with the Academy of Sciences which, until the late 1920's, was left more or less alone. Alexander Vucinich, The Soviet Academy of Sciences, (Stanford, 1956), pp. 7-9.

Most of the major centres of scholarship were located in the RSFSR, but similar trends also took place in other areas of the Soviet Union. Ukraine in particular had a strong historical tradition led by Mikhailo Hrushevsky, and the 1920's saw a flourishing in the study and popularisation of Ukrainian national(ist) history.[17] In other areas of the union, especially Central Asia, literacy was low and there was rarely much of an academic tradition.[18] The Bolsheviks placed significant emphasis on developing literacy, but it was only over time that history as a discipline could develop in many of these areas. This is not to imply that these peoples did not, in one way or another, have a strong sense of the past, simply that it took time for that heritage to be transformed into an academic, institutionalized, Soviet-style history.

---

[13] Following Fitzpatrick, Education and Social Mobility, p. 3, I will use the Russian acronym 'VUZ' to designate higher educational institutions as a group, with university used only for the Russian '*universitet.*'

[14] Ibid., pp. 49-51, quote on pp. 50-51.

[15] Gail Lapidus, 'Educational Strategies and Cultural Revolution: The Politics of Soviet Development,' in Sheila Fitzpatrick, ed., Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928-1931, (Bloomington, 1978), p. 83.

[16] Enteen, The Soviet Scholar-Bureaucrat, pp. 65-69.

[17] Theodore Mackiw, 'The Development of Ukrainian Historiography,' in Ukrainian Review, 34:3 (1986), p. 66. The history was national in the sense that Ukraine was seen as an

By the late 1920's Stalin had begun to take control of the country. The Shakhty trial of 1928 in which a number of engineers were tried and convicted on the grounds of sabotage marked the beginning of a campaign against bourgeois specialists that initiated the drive for the industrialization and proletarianization of the Soviet Union.[19] In all areas of life maximalist policies were pursued in an attempt to rapidly modernize the country. This was accompanied by a Cultural Revolution that stressed proletarian values,

---

historically constituted entity, and nationalist insofar as that history was used to foster a sense of Ukrainian identity.

[18] Jaan Pennar et al., Moderniztion and Diversity in Soviet Education, (New York, 1971). In the Caucasus most of the educational establishments were parochial schools (including one attended by Stalin), while in Central Asia Muslim educational institutions predominated. While in many cases they were highly sophisticated, they did not fit the western academic model that was developed by the Soviet government. (pp. 259-262, 279-283)

[19] Fitzpatrick, Education and Social Mobility, pp. 113-116; Hiroaki Kuromiya, Stalin's Industrial Revolution, (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 12-17.

including a glorification of 'little men' over great heroes, a radical egalitarianism, and class warfare.[20] In society at large, like in history, the majority of officials were non-Bolsheviks who were generally hostile to the new class-war, super-industrialization approach. It was imposed upon them by the government but, as Kuromiya argues, the class war ideology and symbols had a great resonance with many workers, and were 'created' by them as much as by the regime.[21]

While historians were not an important target of these campaigns, the latter also led to major changes in their discipline. Debate no longer focussed on differences in methodology or interpretation, but on politics and social origins.[22] The new egalitarianism and proletarianization combined with the anti-specialist movement led to an intensification of the campaigns for workers' education that had begun in the 1920's. In institutes of higher education this meant that by 1932-33 the proportion of workers reached a high of 58 percent.[23]

---

[20] For discussions of the various aspects of this period see Sheila Fitzpatrick, ed., Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928-1931; Kuromiya, op. cit.; Lynne Viola, The Best Sons of the Fatherland, (Oxford, 1987); Kendall Bailes, Technology and Society under Lenin and Stalin, Ch. 7; Lapidus, 'Educational Strategies and Cultural Revolution,' pp. 90-92.

[21] Kuromiya, op. cit., pp. 28-35, 315-318.

[22] This was especially the case in the more Party-oriented organizations such as the IKP and the CA, (see Fox, op. cit., pp. 35-36) although it also soon affected the Academy of Sciences as well. Vucinich, The Soviet Academy of Sciences, pp. 9-12.

From his predominant position in the field of history, Pokrovskii began the new attacks on bourgeois history. The first indication of what was to come was the negative review he gave in 1928 of a book by E. V. Tarle in _Istorik-Marksist_.[24] Tarle defended his book in a later issue, which was followed by a brief editorial response that largely ignored the issues raised by Tarle and that simply accused him of anti-Marxism and of opposing current political trends.[25] While this intervention was relatively minor, it intitiated the new form of historical argumentation: personal and intolerant attacks designed to enforce conformity with prevailing opinions.

Over the next few years attacks were launched against a variety of historians, schools of thought and institutions, generally in the same tone as the attack on Tarle. In 1929 the focus shifted from individual historians to institutions such as RANION and the Academy of Sciences which were seen as strongholds of bourgeois scholarship.[26] Various national historians and schools of thought (especially the Ukrainian led by M. Yavorsky), came under intense attack.[27] Those who led the charge often fell victim in turn to similar campaigns.[28] Even Pokrovskii was not immune: by 1931 his historical views, especially his central conception of merchant capital, were coming under attack. He conceded many of the points made in the critiques and was able to maintain his position as the head of Soviet historians until his death the following year.[29]

---

[23] Lapidus, 'Educational Strategies and Cultural Revolution,' pp. 90-92, figure cited on p. 92.

[24] M. N. Pokrovskii, '*Novye techeniia v russkoi istoricheskoi literature*,' in _Istorik-Marksist_, vol. 7, (July, 1928), pp. 3-17. _Istorik-Marksist_ was the journal of the IKP, the first serious Soviet Marxist historical journal. See Barber, _Soviet Historians in Crisis_, pp. 18-19.

[25] E. V. Tarle, '*K voprosu o nachale voiny*,' in _ibid_., vol. 9, (Sept., 1928), pp. 101-7, editorial response, pp. 108-109.

[26] Barber, _Soviet Historians in Crisis_, pp. 38-41.

The turning point came in June, 1931. That month's issue of *Proletarskaia Revolutsiia* contained a letter to the editors written by Stalin on 'Some Questions Concerning the History of Bolshevism.'[30] This intervention was similar to the one against Tarle, although Stalin was far more vitriolic in his attack, and naturally, being Stalin, his article had an infinitely greater impact.

---

[27] *Ibid*., pp. 41-46.

[28] *Ibid*., pp. 65-67.

[29] *Ibid*., pp. 57-65, 118-125. Enteen, *The Soviet Scholar-Bureaucrat*, pp. 37-42, 181-186. Enteen, 'Marxist Historians During the Cultural Revolution: A Case Study of Professional In-fighting,' in Fitzpatrick, ed., *Cultural Revolution in Russia*, pp. 156-163, gives a good overview of the various conflicts.

[30] *'O nekotorykh voprosakh istorii bolshevizma,'* in *Proletarskaia Revolutsiia,* 6 (June, 1931), pp. 3-12. Reprinted in *Problems of Leninism*, pp. 378-389. Citations will be from that work. *Proletarskaia Revolutsiia* was the journal of *Istpart*, the Commission on the History of the October Revolution and the History of the Communist Party. They were under the direct control of the Central Committee, publishing everything from the first edition of the complete works of Lenin to reminiscences of revolutionaries. The journal contained many of the latter, as well as a variety of historical articles and sources. It was more overtly ideological than the other major historical journal, *Istorik-Marksist*. See Barber, *Soviet Historians in Crisis*, p. 16.

The letter was in response to an article written by A. G. Slutskii which dealt with Lenin's attitudes and policies towards the German Social-Democratic Party in the pre-war period. He had asserted that Lenin was far more conciliatory towards 'deviations' than the contemporary political climate would allow.[31] The journal editors had acknowledged that he was mistaken, publishing an article that critiqued his views, but initially they defended the value of debate.[32] However, Stalin's letter largely bypassed the various historical debates dealt with by those articles, concentrating instead on the contemporary implications of historical work.

Stalin began by condemning the editors of the journal for having published Slutskii's work at all. He claimed that the issues discussed in the article (and that the editors also held to be legitimate points of discussion) were in fact "axioms of Bolshevism" that had to be simply accepted.[33] He then went on to categorically deny the validity of any of Slutskii's contentions, laying down the 'correct' view of

---

[31] A. G. Slutskii, 'Bolsheviki o germanskoe s.-d. v period ee predvoennovo krizisa,' in ibid., pp. 38-72.

[32] K. Pol, 'Bolsheviki i dovoennyi II internatsional,' in ibid., pp. 22-58.

[33] 'Some Questions Concerning the History of Bolshevism,' pp. 378-379.

Lenin's activities during the pre-war period.[34] In summing up he reiterated that the editors had succumbed to "rotten liberalism," and that they had "made a mistake in permitting a discussion with a falsifier of the history of our Party."[35]

In this letter many of the aspects of Party history discussed in chapter 1 are evident. In the first place, Stalin claims that "the Russian revolution was (and remains) the nodal point of the world revolution."[36] As in the Short Course, the revolution and the activities of Lenin, Stalin and the Bolsheviks are placed at the centre of history and they are portrayed as always and inevitably correct in anything they do. They *are* history. Secondly, he advances the view that "[e]veryone knows that Leninism was born, grew up and became strong in its ruthless struggle against opportunism of every brand,"[37] anticipating the importance given to factionalism later on. Finally, and related to this, he describes the editors' approach to history as "stupidity bordering on crime, bordering on treason to the working class."[38] Any and all deviation from the accepted conception of history is not only wrong, it is a direct attack on the party and thus cannot be tolerated. The task of editors is not to facilitate discussion, but to maintain vigilance lest Trotskyism or any other falsification slip through.[39]

---

[34] Ibid., pp. 379-387.

[35] Ibid., p. 387.

[36] Ibid., p. 385.

[37] Ibid., p. 379. At various points in the article, as in the Short Course, he reduces the different anti-Party trends to a form of Trotskyism (ie, pp. 379, 382, 387-389).

[38] Ibid., p. 388.

The impact of Stalin's intervention was enormous, and not only in history. Between its publication and the summer of 1932 all segments of academia and the ideological classes went into a frenzy of self-examination and purging in an attempt to conform to the new (if vague) demands laid down by Stalin and others.[40] The last vestiges of the old academic debates gave way to the new concern with purity and vigilance based on contemporary political concerns. This is not to say that things were simpler. Rather, the debates over methodology and interpretation gave way to equally complex negotiations through the political and ideological minefield of Stalinist society. The major difference was that from 1930 onward any slip could lead to imprisonment and, in a significant number of cases, death.[41]

---

[39] Ibid., p. 389. Thus, as Enteen points out in 'The Stalinist Conception of Communist Party History,' p. 271, the letter was important not as a statement of interpretation, but as "an instrument of enforcement. It cleared the record of assumptions and findings not in keeping with the conception." The editors certainly understood it that way, appending an editorial note to Stalin's letter admitting their errors and affirming their dedication to the fight against 'falsification' (pp. 13, 199).

[40] On December 12, 1931, for example, *Pravda* (pp. 2-3) published Kaganovich's address to the IKP on their 10th anniversary which attacked such prominent historians as Iaroslavskii who subsequently recanted publically in order to save their positions.

After 1931 the various pieces of the Stalinist conception of history and its institutionalization gradually began to fall into place. The turmoil created during the preceding years meant that little history was taught or studied between 1931 and 1934. Most energy was directed at reconstructing the discipline and more importantly to the government, creating a set of texts and curricula for the teaching of history in all areas of the educational system.[42] This was part of the general consolidation of the massive changes instituted during the period of the Cultural Revolution.

In 1932 and 1933 decrees were issued that called for an end to continual revision of textbooks and for the establishment of a single, centralized system of textbook production that could then produce authoritative historical interpretations.[43] This process culminated in the 1934 decree 'On the teaching of civic history in schools of the

---

[41] For discussions of the letter and its impact see Barber, op. cit., pp. 126-136; Enteen, The Soviet Scholar-Bureaucrat, pp. 142-154; Enteen, 'Marxist Historians during the Cultural Revolution,' pp. 163-165; Tucker, Stalin in Power, pp. 151-162. Many of the orthodox historians of the 1920's were killed in the 1930's, although a number of them (most notably Mints, Nechkina and Pankratova) were able to adapt and thrive in the new world. A number of the previously condemned bourgeois historians (including Tarle) returned to prominence and influence in the 1930's.

[42] Fitzpatrick, Education and Social Mobility, pp. 230-233.

[43] '*Ob uchebnykh programakh i rezhime v nachalnoi i srednei shkole*,' in *Pravda*, Aug. 28, 1932, p. 1 (decree of Aug. 25) and '*Ob uchebnikakh dlia nachalnoi i srednei shkoly*,' in *Pravda*, Feb. 13, 1933, p. 1 (decree of Feb. 12).

USSR.'[44] It rejected what it called the "abstract schematic character" of the teaching of history, calling for an "observance of historical and chronological sequence in the exposition of historical events, with a due emphasis in the memory of the pupils of important historical facts, the names of historical persons and chronological dates."[45]

Despite its brevity, the significance of this decree cannot be overestimated. It represented a consolidation of the changes that had occurred in the field of history over the previous years. The implications of the brief and somewhat cryptic instructions it contained were clear to everyone who was involved in the field of history. Much of the Marxist-Leninist tradition that had prevailed during the 1920's was to disappear, replaced by a history that emphasized the role of specific heroic individuals over classes, events over processes, and *partiinost* over objectivity.[46] The specific historical interpretations were still to come, but the outline was becoming clear. The decree appointed a variety of committees charged with the compilation of the new textbooks that would then form the basis of historical education at all levels. The culmination of this process would be the publication of the Short Course.[47]

---

[44] The decree appeared over the signatures of Stalin and Molotov. In its initial publication on the front page of Pravda, May 16, 1934 it was accompanied by two other decrees on geography and the structure of schools, as well as an editorial calling for higher quality schools. (*'Za vysokoe kachestvo sovietskii shkoly,' 'O prepodavanii grazhdanskoi istorii v shkolakh SSSR,' 'O prepodavanii geografii v nachalnoi i srednei shkole SSSR,' and 'O strukture nachalnoi i srednei shkoly v SSSR.'*)

[45] Ibid. The decree on geography complemented the changed focus, calling for a greater emphasis on the specificity of national geographies, including the publication of "biographies of famous explorers, tales of different countries and peoples, popular descriptions of the most important travels, etc." See also Helene Carrere d'Encausse, 'Determinants and Parameters of Soviet Nationality Policies,' in Jeremy Azrael, ed., Soviet Nationality Policies and Practices, (New York, 1978), pp. 48-49.

One final point mentioned in the decree was that the faculties of history in the universities of Moscow and Leningrad, closed after the revolution, would be reopened.[48] The changes in the organization of the institutional structure of the historical profession had been proceeding for some time. During the early and mid-1930's the diverse groups that made up the profession were gradually purged of non-orthodox members, placed under stricter central control, and eventually disbanded. Journals such as *Proletarskaia Revolutsiia* and *Istorik-marksist* ceased to appear for long periods of time, returning only after the editorial boards had been thoroughly revamped. The Society of Marxist Historians lost most of its influence, eventually disappearing in 1936. The Institute of History, many members of which were involved in the development of the new textbooks called for by the decree on teaching history, was closed in 1936, and many of the textbooks its members had produced were condemned. Its remaining staff was transferred to the Academy of Sciences. The IKP lasted the longest, closing in 1937 after a long decline.[49]

---

[46] This attack was focussed primarily on Pokrovskii and his school which, two years after his death, still had a great influence. The decree marked the start of the process of eradicating Pokrovskii's influence from the field of history. See Barber, Soviet Historians in Crisis, p. 139; Enteen, 'Marxist Historians during the Cultural Revolution,' pp. 166-167.

[47] Shteppa Russian Historians and the Soviet State, pp. 123-145, argues that the decree marked a fundamental shift in the conception and study of history. While it is true that it led to a change in the focus of the discipline, it is more useful to see it as the consolidation of a series of changes than as the start of something new.

[48] Ibid., pp. 147-150 discusses the specific changes that occurred within the universities as a result of the decree.

In 1936, when the Institute of History was absorbed by the newly renamed Soviet Academy of Sciences, the discipline of history was centralized in that institution. The Department of Historical Sciences became one of the eight principal divisions of the Academy, in turn encompassing eight semi-autonomous organizations, the most important of which was the Institute of History. This was further subdivided into twelve sections covering various historical periods, areas of the discipline such as publishing and archives, and sections dealing with methodological issues. The Institute dealt not only with scholarly work, but was also responsible for adult education and efforts at popularizing history through pamphlets, public lectures and support of Party propaganda campaigns.[50]

---

[49] See Barber, Soviet Historians in Crisis, 137-141; Byrnes, 'Creating the Soviet Historical Profession,' p. 302; Enteen, 'Writing Party History in the USSR,' pp. 326-327; Enteen, The Soviet Scholar-Bureaucrat, pp. 187-192; Vucinich, The Soviet Academy of Sciences, p. 13.

After 1934, and especially following the publication of the Short Course, Stalin very rarely intervened in historical debates.[51] A 1936 decree calling for the development of a new history of the Party appeared over his signature,[52] but the only significant statement on history as a discipline (as opposed to mentions of specific historical themes or figures) was his 1937 'Letter to the Compilers of the Textbook on the History of the CPSU(b)' which dealt with the Short Course.[53] Aside from these rare statements, interventions took the form of anonymous decrees or directives issued by the Central Committee, or of editorials and articles in leading Party publications signed by secondary officials.[54]

Whatever the form of the intervention the task of interpretation, whether undertaken by historians or others, required a certain type of skill, a good understanding of the general cultural landscape, and a degree of luck. In his discussion of economic planning during the 1930's Lewis

---

[50] Ibid., pp. 21-41.

[51] This was the case in general as well. Stalin's Sochineniia comprise 13 volumes for the period up to 1934, while the following 20 years fill only 3.

[52] Pravda, Jan., 27, 1936, p. 2. This was accompanied by the publication of two 1934 decrees on Party history that had not previously been released.

[53] Originally published in Bolshevik, it was reprinted in Pravda, May 6, 1937, p. 3. (see chapter 1)

[54] Black, op. cit., pp. 16-17.

Siegelbaum suggests that Soviet economic targets set under Stalin should not be taken literally, but "appear to have been established as orientational guidelines indicative of priorities."[55] A similar statement could be made about government interventions into historical debate. As during the early 1930's they took the form of general statements referring to contemporary debates and institutional relations, and it was then the task of historians and others to try to interpret and implement them. The negative reception accorded many of the textbooks produced after the 1934 decree demonstrates the difficulty in interpreting government statements and the ways in which, as in industry and any other area of society, constantly shifting priorities meant that keeping one step ahead of the desires and demands of the government was the most important ability a historian could have.

With the exception of the war years, the institutional organization of the field of history remained relatively stable throughout the rest of the Stalin period, with the focus shifting to the propagation and diffusion of history throughout society. As we have seen, the development of an historical consciousness in the population as a whole was an important goal of the educational establishment. The various decrees on textbooks and curricula accompanied broader

---

[55] Lewis Siegelbaum, Stakhanovism and the Politics of Productivity in the USSR, 1935-1941, (Cambridge, 1988), p. 139.

educational policies that enabled the government to reach effectively most segments of society through the school system.

Initially the most important aspect of education was the promotion of literacy. Prior to the revolution literacy in the Empire had been quite low, especially in Central Asia and the Caucasus where in most areas less than 10 percent of the population could read.[56] During the 1920's government policy attempted both to increase the literacy rate and to promote the development of the many national languages that made up the Union. This included the creation of alphabets and grammars for about 40 oral languages, the transformation of about 45 others, and the development of educational institutions to teach those languages. In the 15 Union Republics the dominant languages also began to be used in general education, workplaces, government and media.[57]

By the 1930's this policy had been quite successful, although the goal of literacy and cultural programs shifted to more instrumental goals of productivity and ideology, that is, the development of efficient and docile labourers.[58] In 1939 the overall literacy rate in the Soviet Union stood at 87.4 percent, with all of the Union republics having achieved a rate of at least 75 percent. Twenty years later the all-Union rate was 98.5 percent.[59] The development of literacy was not entirely even. In all the areas discussed above the improvement in the situation of women was much greater than that of men, although, they continued to remain behind men in absolute numbers throughout the period. Overall in 1939 the literacy rate for men was 93.5 percent, while women had only reached 81.6 percent. The gap between men and women was similar to that which existed between urban and rural inhabitants, with the 1939 rates standing at 93.8 and 84 percent respectively.[60]

---

[56] Narodnoe Obrazovanie Nauka i Kultura v SSSR: Statisticheskii Sbornik, (Moscow, 1977), pp. 9-10. One of the main problems with any discussion of literacy is in defining it. Is the ability to sign one's own name a sign of literacy, or is it the ability to function effectively in a literary culture? If so, what does that entail? Roger Pethybridge, The Social Prelude to Stalinism, (London, 1974), pp. 132-195, discusses aspects of literacy in the stalinist context.

[57] Jonathan Pool, 'Soviet Language Planning: Goals, Results, Options,' in Azrael, ed., op. cit., pp. 226-228.

This remarkable increase in literacy was a result of the massive development of the educational system, especially at the secondary level. Overall enrollment in schools increased 3.6 times between 1914/15 and 1940/41, and 3 times between 1927/28 and 1940/42, remaining relatively stable until after 1953. In the same periods secondary enrollment rose 24.7 and

---

[58] John Barber, 'Working-Class culture and Political Culture in the 1930's,' in Hans Gunther, ed., The Culture of the Stalin Period, (London, 1990), pp. 5-6; Siegelbaum, op. cit., pp. 210-246.

[59] Narodnoe Obrazovanie, pp. 9-10.

[60] Ibid., p. 9. The gaps were much narrower than in 1926 when the male/female difference was 28.8 percent and the urban/rural 30.3 percent.

8.5 times respectively.[61] The change was even more dramatic in non-Slavic areas. In Uzbekistan, for example, the 1914/15-1940/41 period saw elementary enrollment rise 71 times and secondary 127 times,[62] while the corresponding figures for Azerbaidzhan were 11 and 357 times.[63] In Kirgizia, Tadzhikistan and Armenia secondary education had been virtually non-existent prior to the revolution.[64] Overall in 1939 11 percent of the Soviet population over 10 years old had received some secondary education, rising to 36 percent in 1959, while the spread of primary education or its equivalent followed the literacy rate, approaching universality.[65]

In a discussion of Soviet historical culture and identity, literacy and education are key elements. History as a unifying discourse could only become important in a situation where the majority of the population could be exposed to similar histories in similar ways. As we have seen, the government was extremely concerned with the development and propagation of textbooks and curricula which were centrally regulated, more or less consistent throughout the state, and stable over time. This development, combined with the spread of literacy and education, meant that throughout the Soviet Union people began to see themselves through a similar historical lens.[66] However, the education system provided only the foundations for the historical culture, both through the teaching of history and throught the development of the skills necessary for people to participate in mass culture. We will now turn to the broader context of the culture as a whole.

---

[61] Ibid., pp. 26-27. The figures for the pre-1939 period given here and in what follows cover the entire geographical area of the post-1939 Soviet Union, including those territories annexed in 1939. In some areas (especially the Slavic regions) enrollment actually decreased after the war, but this was due primarily to the massive population loss.

[62] Ibid., pp. 40-41.

[63] Ibid., pp. 48-49.

[64] Ibid., pp. 58-59, 60-61, 62-63 respectively. The statistics for the individual republics fluctuated to an extent in the post-war period, but, like the overall figures, they remained relatively stable up to 1953.

[65] Ibid., pp. 15-16. The rates varied from region to region in 1939, although by 1959 the rates were similar everywhere.

Socialist Realism and History

In Stalinist society the arts[67] in general held a somewhat ambiguous position. On the one hand the government considered the arts to be crucial in the construction (to use a stalinist metaphor) of new Soviet individuals. On the other it recognized the ambiguous nature of art and its anti-authoritarian potential. As a result the arts were heavily policed, and much energy was expended in bringing into being an aesthetic that could be harnessed to the cause of socialist construction.

---

[66] This is not to say that they saw themselves in a similar fashion.

[67] By 'art' and 'the arts' I am referring to literature, painting, film, sculpture, architecture, etc. Popular culture may be a more useful designation, but I will continue to use art in the way socialist realism intended it: a mass produced and consumed culture of and for the people.

The aesthetic that eventually acheived hegemony was that of socialist realism. It was first and foremost a theory and practice of literature, with the novel acting as the vanguard or exemplary form of cultural expression and other forms of art following its lead in many respects. The following discussions will mirror this situation, with literature forming the basis for analysis, supplemented by other artistic media.

The first Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934 defined socialist realism as:

> the basic method of Soviet literature and literary criticism. It demands of the artist the truthful, historically concrete representation of reality in its revolutionary development. Moreover, the truthfulness and historical concreteness of the artistic representation of reality must be linked with the task of ideological transformation and education of workers in the spirit of socialism.[68]

This declaration does little to help us understand socialist realism as an artistic tradition or as a body of work. As Sheila Fitzpatrick points out, literature, painting, film, drama, and all of the arts had their own particular form of socialist realist expression based on a variety of influences and each with its own exemplary models.[69] As well, while the official definition of socialist realism was important it, like many government injunctions, simply established a general orientation rather than an explanation of the specific ways in which the arts were to proceed.[70] A discussion of the specific forms taken by socialist realist works over time and genres is beyond the scope of this paper. However, a brief discussion of the ways in which socialist realism functioned and interacted with history is crucial for any further discussion of stalinist historical culture.[71]

---

[68] Quoted in Tertz [Sinyavskii], op. cit., p. 24.

[69] Fitzpatrick, 'Culture and Politics under Stalin,' pp. 223-224.

The definition given above sets out the key axis along which socialist realism was to function, namely that of past-present-future. "While representing the present, [the socialist realist] listens to the march of history and looks toward the future."[72] The historical understanding that was expressed in socialist realist dogma was clearly analogous to that expressed in the Short Course. With the correct 'historically concrete representation of reality' (available to all only through the Party, and ultimately Stalin), the past, and by extension the future, becomes transparent, and could thus form the basis of both social cohesion and social transformation in the present.

---

[70] The 1934 Congress was, like the 1934 decree on history, the point at which a variety of changes that had been occurring in the literary world congealed into their 'stalinist' form. Leonid Heller, 'A World of Prettiness: Socialist Realism and its Aesthetic Categories,' in South Atlantic Quarterly, 94:3 (1995), pp. 698-699 states that "socialist realims was normative, but only negatively so: it gave practical instructions on what could not be done, but its positive applications and theorizing...remained highly nebulous."

[71] Some of the more interesting general works on socialist realism include Fitzpatrick, 'Culture and Politics Under Stalin'; Tertz [Sinyavskii], op. cit.; Regine Robin, Socialist Realism: An Impossible Aesthetic, (Stanford, 1992[1986]); Clark, The Soviet Novel; Boris Groys, The Total Art of Stalinism, (Princeton, 1992[1988]); Gunther, ed., The Culture of the Stalin Period; South Atlantic Quarterly, 94:3 (Summer, 1995), special issue edited by Thomas Lahusen and Evgeny Dobrenko under the title 'Socialist Realism without Shores.'

[72] Tertz [Sinyavskii], op. cit., p. 25.

Socialist realism could serve the dual purpose of promoting both stability and change without contradicting itself because it was fundamentally an open aesthetic. Since the past was totally transparent to the ever-changing present, contemporary artistic works were continually open to reinterpretation and rewriting.[73] This extended to pre-revolutionary and non-Soviet works as well. They were reread in the light of the Revolution and the Soviet age, with 'progressive' and 'regressive' labels attached to any and all works of art.[74]

The open nature of socialist realism led to one of the more bizarre aspects of stalinism whereby censorship and government supervision in the name of the people was glorified and emphasized as part of the ritual purification of art.[75]

---

[73] Heller, 'A World of Prettiness,' pp. 696-698.

[74] See chapter 4 for a more detailed examination of a specific example of the integration of the art of all periods into the Soviet.

[75] Mikhail Iampolski, 'Censorhship as the Triumph of Life,' in South Atlantic Quarterly, 94:3 (1995), pp. 865-868. In his speeches on literature Zhdanov constantly emphasized and

However, this was a function of the internal logic of stalinist culture. As in history where Stalin was the ever-shifting yet always stable centre of the whirlpool, in art "an automatic ration of 'guilt' and 'mistakes' was now allocated to everyone, because the right to the ultimate truth, and the ability to judge 'correctness,' could belong only to the Communist Party, or, to be more exact, to Stalin himself."[76]

The incorporation of censorship into stalinist culture also means that it cannot be considered in the same way as, for example, western european culture. Censorship led to the formation of an 'Aesopian language,' a tradition whereby censorship was circumvented through a variety of techniques designed to conceal subversive meanings. In addition, the reader developed a sophistication in reading between the lines of texts, either to find deliberately hidden meanings, or to 'see through' the official intentions of the author.[77]

The parallel between socialist realism and the stalinist conception of history also extended to the way in which it was conceptualized. In an analogous sense to the way that

---

lauded the directed and tendentious nature of socialist realism. See Andrei Zhdanov, Essays on Literature, Philosophy, and Music, pp. 7-15 [from a 1934 speech] and pp. 15-44 [from a 1946 speech].

[76] Tarkhanov and Kavtaradze, op. cit., p. 50. They are referring specifically to architecture in this quote, but it is equally applicable to all the arts. Like Iampolski, they refer to this as "ritual criticism."

[77] See Lev Loseff, On the Beneficence of Censorship: Aesopian Language in Modern Russian Literature, (Munich, 1984) for an excellent general overview of Aesopian culture.

stalinist history collapsed the distinctions between past, present and historian, "the art of Socialist Realism wanted to go beyond the bounds of the traditional 'artist-spectator-aesthetic object' relationship and become the direct motivating force of social development."[78]

That attempt was based on the historical understanding that informed stalinist society. 'Historical concreteness' was the foundation on which socialist realism built in order to resolve the dichotomy between 'what is' and 'what ought to be.'[79] Artistic works thus effaced the distinctions between artist-spectator-aesthetic object, as well as between past-present-future. The result was that the past could ostensibly speak to the present in an unmediated fashion.[80] Socialist realism formed a sort of 'dream theatre,' "a complex allegorical device, helping to transform communist society under the Five-Year Plans into a unified ideological and psychological space, a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, in which state and art could mix indissolubly."[81] The form of the socialist realist work was thus in which a conservative orientation towards contemporary society was combined with a ritual evocation of the revolutionary nature of past and future society which then served to support the conception of the present.

---

[78] Boris Groys, 'The Birth of Socialist Realism from the Spirit of the Russian Avant-Garde,' in Gunther, ed., op. cit., p. 125. He is referring specifically to visual art, but 'spectator' in the quote could also be replaced with 'reader.'

[79] See Clark, The Soviet Novel, pp. 37-41; Leonid Heller and Antoine Baudin, 'Le Realisme Socialiste Comme Organisation du Champ Culturel,' in Cahiers du Monde Russe et Sovietique, XXXIV:3 (1993), p. 313; Zhdanov, op. cit., pp. 12-14 [from 1934 speech].

[80] The *Kukryniksy* poster (fig. 3), which will be discussed at greater length later, provides an example of this.

The notion of an 'historical culture' that forms the context of this discussion also implies that the forms of expression through which that culture was disseminated had a certain connection with a great proportion of the people. In this sense the various experimental 'proletarian' genres of art that arose during the 1920's did not involve the formation of an historical culture, as they were never popular among those who made up the two pillars of Soviet society, the workers and the peasants.[82] Socialist realism, on the other hand, did fulfill many of the goals that the government set for it. This can be seen in the relationship of the masses to its formation, its popularity, and its wide availability.

During the late 1920's and early 1930's the government expended significant energy in trying to give the masses an input into the formation of the new Soviet culture. Their responses were collected and in many cases published in a variety of studies, papers and magazines. In an examination of these sources Evgeny Dobrenko found that workers and peasants had their own particular view of what made literature good. Most of the elements they consistently cited as desirable, whether it was the need for realistic yet heroic characters, overall optimism, accessibility or the value of a certain degree of cultural instruction, eventually went on to form the basis of socialist realism. The literary institutions and authors thus seem to have taken the desires of the masses to heart.[83] "Soviet criticism resounded with the demands of the mass reader, and those demands coincided almost completely with the demands of state power."[84]

---

[81] Wolfgang Holz, 'Allegory and iconography in Socialist Realist painting,' in Matthew Cullerne Bown and Brandon Taylor, eds., Art of the Soviets: Painting, sculpture and architecture in a one-party state, 1917-1992, (Manchester, 1993), pp. 77-79, quote p. 79.

[82] Richard Stites, Russian Popular Culture, (Cambridge, 1992), especially ch. 2.

This direct indication of the influence of the masses on the formation of stalinist literature can be combined with Katarina Clark's analysis of the socialist realist novel. She contends that the development of socialist realism did not set out a particular style of writing that was to be followed, but rather it gradually established a set of canonical works that were to act as exemplars for other authors and which served as reference points for literary criticism. Out of this grew a 'master plot' made up of a variety of elements of these novels, but which was "not merely a literary plot or even the formula for a literary plot. It [was] the literary expression of the master categories that organize[d] the entire culture." Socialist realist literature was mythical in the sense that it was not referential or descriptive, but was a form of ritual that acted to unify and strengthen society in particular ways and around particular figures and centres of power.[85]

---

[83] Evgeny Dobrenko, 'The Disaster of Middlebrow Taste, or, Who "Invented" Socialist Realism?,' in The South Atlantic Quarterly, 94:3 (Summer, 1995), pp. 784-796.

[84] Ibid., p. 799.

These factors indicate that literature had a significant resonance with a large proportion of the population,[86] that it can be considered as an important if ambiguous element in a changing soviet identity, and that "it is not sufficient to demonstrate how, over time, official values have been imposed upon literature, since these official values have themselves been culturally determined."[87] Socialist realist literature was neither a reflection of the will of the masses (as the stalinist view would have it), nor a totalitarian imposition of State power. Rather, in Dobrenko's words, it was the product of "the "power-masses," functioning as a *single creator*,"[88] forming "a contact point and a cultural compromise between two currents, the masses and state power."[89]

---

[85] Clark, The Soviet Novel, quote on p. 14. See especially the introduction and conclusion.

[86] Barber, 'Working-Class Culture and Political Culture in the 1930's,' pp. 6-8, describes reading as the most popular cultural activity among workers during the 1930's.

[87] Clark, The Soviet Novel, p. xiii.

[88] Dobrenko, op. cit., p. 774.

[89] Ibid., p. 803.

The emphasis that Dobrenko puts upon 'creation' is somewhat misleading. Socialist realist literature was based on a variety of influences, a few of which would include 18th century Russian literature, prominent 19th century writers such as Pushkin and Tolstoy, the 'fact-based' writing promoted by the avant-garde Left Front of Art, the 'proletarian realism' of the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers, the 'God-building' trend in the Bolshevik party, and the 'revolutionary romanticism' that had been popular in various forms since the 19th century.[90] The 'power-masses' was less a creator than an engineer, combining elements of the various influences, added a few new ones, and thus bringing into being the new form of literature.

This also implied a new way of producing artistic works. As was the case with the Short Course, throughout stalinist culture works of art began to be produced by brigades of artist-workers, and their products were judged and discussed alongside and in a similar fashion to industrial or agricultural production.[91] As in industrial production, and as the socialist realist aesthetic implied, Stalin and the Party were the final and infallible arbiters of culture. "[T]hey were as entitled to issue orders on the production of novels and sculptures as they were to direct the smelting of steel or the planting of beets" because "they were in reality creating the only permitted work of art--socialism."[92] The aesthetic denied the autonomy of the artist and the artwork, subordinating it to the demands of 'the people.'

---

[90] See the following (in order) for discussions of the different influences: Tertz, op. cit., pp. 71-76; Fitzpatrick, 'Culture and Politics under Stalin,' pp. 223-224; Brown, Russian Literature Since the Revolution, pp. 119-122; Clark, The Soviet Novel, pp. 33-34, 152-155; Zhdanov, op. cit. [1946], pp. 24, 32-34.

[91] In his reports to the 17th and 18th congresses, for example, Stalin covers industrial, agricultural and cultural progress and production. See 'Report on the Work of the Central Committee to the Seventeenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B.),' [Jan. 26, 1934] and 'Report on the Work of the Central Committee to the Eighteenth Congress of the

One of the most notable features of the influences listed above is their almost totally Slavic, and especially Russian, nature.[93] The notion that the rise of the novel was roughly contemporary with the rise of the nation-state is a commonplace of literary criticism.[94] This would begin to explain the dominance of Slavic literary traditions. Paul Goble discusses a number of points in relation to this. In Slavic areas the practice of writing from a national context

---

C.P.S.U.(B.),' [March 10, 1939] in Problems of Leninism, pp. 454-519, 596-642.

[92] Groys, The Total Art of Stalinism, p. 36.

[93] A large number of the writers that influenced early Soviet literature were Jewish, however they tended to write from a Russian or Soviet context. I will not attempt to go deeper into their complex relationship with Russia and the Revolution.

[94] Timothy Hampton, Writing From History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature, (Ithaca, 1990) discusses this point. I cite this particular work as it has been extremely useful in thinking through many of the issues discussed here and elsewhere, especially the problems of the relationship of literature and history, and the historical role played by the 'exemplary life,' a prominent feature of stalinist society.

was a long tradition, but in many other areas of what became the Soviet Union this was not the case. Frequently oral tradition dominated, especially among the largely illiterate masses, while the tiny literate segment of society wrote either from a religious context or in the context of the Empire. Goble thus emphasizes that especially in Central Asia, but also to a large extent in the Caucasus, the formation of the Soviet Union was instrumental in producing *national* literatures.[95]

The situation that prevailed in literature was mirrored to some extent in other areas of stalinist culture as well. Lynn Mally describes the extremely popular and popularly-created Autonomous Theatre as one of the primary sources of socialist realist theatre, although its popularity did decline somewhat once it was stripped of most of its spontaneous elements.[96] Socialist realist architecture, unlike the constructivist experimentation that had gone on during the 1920's, was generally applauded by the masses.[97] Finally, socialist realist painting proved to be a successful and inspirational form of expression, although not as widely distributed as the agit-prop posters that were seen everywhere throughout the Stalin period, especially during the war.

---

[95] Paul Goble, 'Readers, Writers, and Republics: The Structural Basis of Non-Russian Literary Politics,' in Lubomyr Hajda and Mark Beissinger, eds., The Nationalities Factor in Soviet Politics and Society, (Boulder, 1990), pp. 132-136. The article emphasizes primarily the rise of national literatures of the Union republican peoples.

[96] Lynn Mally, 'Autonomous Theatre and the Origins of Socialist Realism: The 1932 Olympiad of Autonomous Art,' in Russian Review, 52:2 (1993), pp. 208-211.

[97] Tarkhanov and Kavtaradze, op. cit., p. 40.

Perhaps the most important unifying force amongst the various artistic genres was film. "The movies embraced all of popular culture: folkloric themes and narrative styles, popular music and dance, *estrada*, fiction, and pictorial reprsentation."[98] It thus served as a way in which the various genres were combined, helping to create and propagate a common set of cultural references and practices. These commonalities largely cut across national lines as well, with the relatively highly developed non-Russian cinemas all "stress[ing] a voluntaristic and event-oriented vision of the world and of the national past."[99]

The specifically *Soviet* nature of cinema was enhanced by a number of other factors as well. The most obvious was that the rise of film was almost contemporary with the Revolution, ensuring that the Bolsheviks did not have a strong and potentially antagonistic tradition to contend with as they did in other areas. It also required a large, centralized organization and a good deal of money both to produce and to distribute films, resources which were solely available through the government. In comparison with other cultural areas, relatively few works could be produced, making it easier to police.

---

[98] Stites, Russian Popular Culture, p. 27. *Estrada* was a popular form of live entertainment that combined theatre, comedy, song and dance, and that was used most effectively in frontline entertainment during the Great Patriotic War. Folklore will be discussed at greater length in the following chapter.

[99] Sylvie Dallet, 'Historical Time in Russian, Armenian, Georgian and Kirghiz Cinema,' in Anna Lawton, ed., The Red Screen: Politics, Society, Art in Soviet Cinema, (London, 1992), p. 303.

Perhaps the most important reason was that Stalin himself loved movies. He directly involved himself in the industry, from the mid-1930's on personally watching every movie that was made, deciding himself which should be released, which remade, and which scrapped altogether.[100] Of all the genres of film historical works, and especially epics, were his favourite.[101] However, in part because of Stalin's intense involvement, the overall production of films was low. Between 1933 and 1940 308 Soviet films were distributed,[102] and output declined to 70 during the war.[103] After the war there was a precipitous drop in production, reaching a low of only nine films produced in 1951.[104]

---

[100] Peter Kenez, Cinema & Soviet Society, 1917-1953, (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 140-156; Rosalind Marsh, Images of Dictatorship: Portraits of Stalin in literature, (London, 1989), pp. 32-33; Tucker, Stalin in Power, pp. 556-558.

[101] Marsh, op. cit., pp. 32-33.

[102] Kenez, Cinema & Soviet Society, p. 160.

[103] Kenez, 'Black and White: The War on Film,' in Richard Stites, ed., Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia, (Bloomington, 1995), p. 166.

[104] Kenez, Cinema and Soviet Society, p. 210. As a comparison Kenez cites the 400-500 films produced by Hollywood in an average year during that period. (p. 211)

Low production levels made cinema fare somewhat monotonous, but it also ensured that the few films that were made were widely known, increasing the importance of the cinema in creating a pan-Soviet set of cultural references. This was reinforced by the development of film production ouside of Russia. Already in 1928 Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaidzhan, Armenia and Uzbekistan each had at least one film studio.[105] The film industries of Central Asia, and especially Alma-Ata, developed significantly during the Great Patriotic War when studios were moved behind the Urals, with every Union republic eventually getting its own studio.[106]

The rise of socialist realism, an aesthetic easily accessible to all, went along with the promotion of *kulturnost'*[107] as one of the character traits a good Soviet citizen should cultivate. To this end the government put significant emphasis on the propagation of the various forms of cultural expression. The newly created literature, for example, was widely available during most of the Stalin period. In 1940 462 million copies of nearly 46 thousand titles were published, representing a rough average of the period as a whole.[108] The government placed great stress on the development of libraries, of which there were over 86,000 in 1940, rising to 137,000 in 1953. At least 80 percent of them were in the countryside, although they tended to be much smaller than those in the cities, accounting for less than half the total number of books.[109] Many of the libraries were in locations such as clubs, hospitals, tourist establishments, enterprises and farms.[110]

---

[105] Ibid., p. 79.

[106] Ibid., p. 192.

[107] Roughly translated it would be 'cultured-ness,' but there is no English equivalent for this term. It implies everything from a general knowledge and enjoyment of the arts to proper dress and table manners.

Despite the low levels of film production, distribution increased dramatically. In 1928 there were 7,331 film projectors in the Soviet Union, increasing to 28,000 in 1941 and 52,288 in 1951.[111] A major effort was made to reach all areas of the Union. By 1941 there were more than double the number of projectors in rural over urban regions, rising to more than triple in 1951.[112] Geographical distribution of cinema was likewise relatively even. Throughout the period around one-third of the projectors were located outside the

---

[108] Cultural Progress in the U.S.S.R.: Statistical Returns, (Moscow, 1958), p. 320. Of those books 34,404 titles and 346 million were in Russian.

[109] Ibid., p. 263.

[110] Ibid., p. 262.

[111] Ibid., pp. 302-303. The increase between 1941 and 1951 is even more dramatic considering that at least half the projectors were destroyed during the war.

[112] Ibid., pp. 300-301. Rural projectors heavily outnumbered urban in all republics except the heavily urbanized Baltic region. (pp. 306-309)

RSFSR.[113] While the peasants thoroughly enjoyed movies, there were a number of obstacles to bringing movies to the countryside, the most important being the lack of electricity in some regions, poor quality of rural movie equipment, the need to constantly move the equipment from place to place, and the fact that filmmakers had a difficult time creating movies that appealed to peasants. This was reflected in the fact there were more shows and more tickets sold in urban areas despite the far lower number of projectors in cities.[114] In total by 1940 900 million movie tickets were sold in the Soviet Union, triple the number of 1928, and rising to over 1.1 billion in 1950.[115]

Other cultural institutions grew as well. The number of museums in the Soviet Union increased from 180 in 1914 to a peak of 991 in 1941, although the large majority were in Slavic areas. The greatest number (with the exception of those covering local themes) and the most popular museums were dedicated to historical and historico-revolutionary themes.[116] Theatres spread throughout the Union, reaching 908 in 1941, of which 387 were itinerant troupes. By 1950, in spite of a drop in the total number of theatre companies, the annual attendance reached 68 million. Unlike most other cultural institutions, the distribution of theatres among the various Union republics was more or less proportional.[117]

---

[113] Ibid., pp. 302-303.

[114] Ibid., pp. 310-311. Kenez, Cinema and Soviet Society, pp. 90-95.

[115] Ibid., pp. 132-133; Cultural Progress in the U.S.S.R., pp. 310-311.

[116] Ibid., pp. 288-291.

The investment placed in centralized and centralizing cultural production reinforced the industrial orientation of the socialist realist aesthetic. This prompted Stalin to refer to writers as 'engineers of human souls,' and drove Zhdanov to give the following defense of that formulation:

> [Critics] think that if waste is permitted in production or if a production program for articles of mass consumption or a wood storage plan is not fulfilled--then to place the blame for this is a natural thing, but if waste is permitted in the education of human souls, if waste is permitted in the business of educating the youth, here one must be tolerant. But actually, is this not a far graver fault than the non-fulfillment of a production assignment?[118]

The task of bringing a Soviet people into being, of creating Soviet souls, was of paramount importance. As befitted a mass industrial society, that task was given to an industrial aesthetic whose products could be mass-consumed. Distinction of high and low art were rendered meaningless, with the only criteria that mattered being the proper education and formation of the people.

---

[117] Ibid., pp. 294-295.

[118] Zhdanov, op. cit., [1946] p. 34.

Chapter 3

HISTORY AND THE NATION

The Frontier

From the perspective of the Cold War the Soviet Union appeared to the western observer as a monolithic and closed entity shrouded in secrecy and protected by a military and a metaphorical Iron Curtain. In this image the frontier stands out as a powerful symbol for east-west division, exemplified by the Berlin Wall, but extending to all areas of the international order. It was mirrored in the Soviet Union by portrayals of capitalist encirclement (the corollary of the policy of containment) and a need to maintain vigilantly the sanctity of the borders of the Union and, to a lesser extent, the post-war socialist community.

The Cold War symbolic frontier did not, however, come into being until near the end of the Stalin period. In fact, if we consider the internationalist foundations of Marxism and Leninism, as well as of the early Soviet state, the rise of the frontier as a powerful image at all seems paradoxical. Until the late 1920's the border of the Soviet Union represented only the temporary limits of the revolution. It existed primarily as a challenge, a symbol of what had been accomplished and what still needed to be done.[1] As we have seen, however, the stalinist conception of history and society transformed marxist-leninist notions of the revolution. The acceptance of the notion of 'socialism in one country' implied a reconceptualization of the frontier. "Pending the world revolution, the only line between self and other was to be drawn along the borders of the Soviet Union."[2]

This change occurred during the 1930's. The receding possibility of a world-wide revolution, the demands of industrialization, the rise of external threats, especially from the Nazis, and the development of a powerful centralized, bureaucratic state all involved a 'nationalization' of the class basis of the Soviet Union.[3] As discussed in chapter 2 this initially led to an attempt at proletarianizing the country, both through the active promotion of workers in industry, agriculture and education, and through the glorification of workers in the cultural and ideological spheres. Socialism in one country needed a powerful proletariat in order to survive. By 1934 this policy had gradually given way to a less ideologically militant and more nuanced (though increasingly deadly) social organization, one that was contained within distinct boundaries.

---

[1] Carrere d'Encausse, 'Determinants and Parameters of Soviet Nationalities Policy,' pp. 40-47. The notion of an open state whose borders would expand with the revolution formed the juridical as well as the theoretical foundations of the state. (p. 40)

[2] Yuri Slezkine, 'From Savages to Citizens: The Cultural Revolution in the Soviet Far North, 1928-1938,' in Slavic Review, 51:1, (1992), p. 57.

[3] Anatole Mazour, The Writing of History in the Soviet Union, (Stanford, 1971), pp. 17-21 discusses some of the historical debates surrounding these issues.

One of the best analyses of the ways in which marxist and leninist notions of class changed over this period is given by Sheila Fitzpatrick. During the 1920's one of the primary concerns of the Soviet government was to 'classify' all segments of society. This culminated in the 1926 census which "created something that might be called *virtual classes*: a statistical representation that enabled Soviet Marxists (and future generations of historians) to operate on the premise that Russia was a class society."[4] These virtual classes were vague and participation in them could be negotiated. The fundamental change that began to occur was that class became an ascribed condition based on government decisions rather than an objective description of a particular social order as it was for Marx.[5]

By the end of the Cultural Revolution the convoluted debates over class ended and the new system was codified through the reintroduction of internal passports. They designated the 'social position' (not class) of everyone in the country, ascribing such positions as worker, employee,

---

[4] Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'Ascribing Class: The Construction of Social Identity in Soviet Russia,' in Journal of Modern History, 65 (1993), pp. 749-752, quote p. 755. (Italics in original)

[5] Ibid., pp. 745-746, 752-754.

kolkhoznik,[6] and a variety of intelligentsia occupations to all citizens. Given the fact that these designations were basically life-long, Fitzpatrick likens the new system to the pre-Revolutionary division of society based on the *soslovie* (social estate).[7] The culmination of this process came in the 1936 constitution when class conflict was declared to have been resolved, ending discrimination on the basis of class and making 'social position' the prime social distinction.[8]

The change in the conception of class can be seen most distinctly in the enemies who were singled out for attack. During the Cultural Revolution 'class enemies' were the prime target, the emphasis being on bourgeois elements within the country. By the time of the Purges of 1936-38 the focus had shifted to 'enemies of the people,' often in association with foreign enemies. This conceptual change did not absolve former class-enemies of guilt; rather, they were frequently rounded up along with the new enemies of the people, their designation but not their fate changed.[9]

---

[6] A *kolkhoznik* is a collective farmer.

[7] Ibid., pp. 763-767. This was supplemented by 'proto-*soslovie*' such as bureaucratic and professional elites, Stakhanovites, etc. that were not included on passports (pp. 767-768).

[8] Stalin, 'On the Draft Constitution of the U.S.S.R.,' (1936) in Problems of Leninism, pp. 547-551. The constitution seems to have been effective in producing a feeling of participation in a Soviet (non-class based) nation that entitled people to certain rights and privileges. For example, basing themselves on the new constitution, peasants began to demand the same working conditions and benefits given to workers, and resented their unconstitutional status as second-class citizens who were tied to their social and geographical positions. See Fitzpatrick, Stalin's Peasants, pp. 9-10, 129-130.

The shift to 'enemies of the people' is especially significant in that it demonstrates the extent to which class had been nationalized. The prime threat to the Soviet Union now came from outside, often through internal 'lackeys of foreign powers.' Until 1945 (but excluding the period from August 1939 to June 1941) the major enemy was Nazi Germany, while after the war the imperialist powers took centre stage, but in each period the effect was similar: the frontier replaced class distinction as the symbolic locus of struggle. As a result the Soviet Union began to take on national characteristics, and issues of nationality and the nation moved to the forefront in all areas of Soviet life.

In his discussion of the nation-state Etienne Balibar emphasizes that it does not do away with internal differences, but subordinates and relativizes those differences to that of inside and outside, which is conceptualized as the only immutable and 'sacred' division. The frontier thereby becomes the basis of national identity.[10] The Soviet Union presents a somewhat unique case. Nationality had a very ambiguous status in that the Union was explicitly made up of a variety of nations, even while it was taking on many national characteristics itself. Nevertheless, the process described by Balibar did take place in the Soviet Union. Distinctions of class, of nationality understood as an ethnic or linguistic community, as well as all other divisions, were subordinated to that of 'the (Soviet) people.' This was accompanied by a renewed use of terms such as *rodina* (homeland or motherland) and the glorification of patriotism as a virtue, both of which had been anathemized after the revolution as bourgeois notions.[11]

---

[9] Fitzpatrick, 'Ascribing Class,' pp. 756-762. This coincides with the rise of factionalism in the stalinist conception of history (see chapter 1). The description of the development of the discipline of history given in chapter 2 is an example of this process in action.

[10] Etienne Balibar, 'The Nation Form: History and Ideology,' in Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, eds., Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities, (London, 1991), pp. 94-95.

The nation that was being defended was perhaps most powerfully symbolized in gender terms. Vera Mukhina's statue *Worker and Collective Farm Girl* (fig. 1) created for the 1937 international exhibition in Paris provides the most famous example of the worker-peasant *smychka* (union) on which the Soviet Union was based.[12] The gender division portrayed by it was found throughout Stalinist society, with women serving primarily as a symbol for the unchanging, eternal, agricultural nation, and men as the dynamic, progressive,

---

[11] Klaus Mehnert, Stalin Versus Marx, pp. 21-25. After 1930 Soviet jurists also reintroduced the concept of state sovereignty. See Carrere d'Encausse, op. cit., p. 48.

[12] See Matthew Cullerne Bown, Art under Stalin, (Oxford, 1991), pp. 82, 136. It later graced the entrance of the All-Union Exhibition of the People's Economy in Moscow. She was honored with the first group of winners of the Stalin Prize in 1941 for the statue.

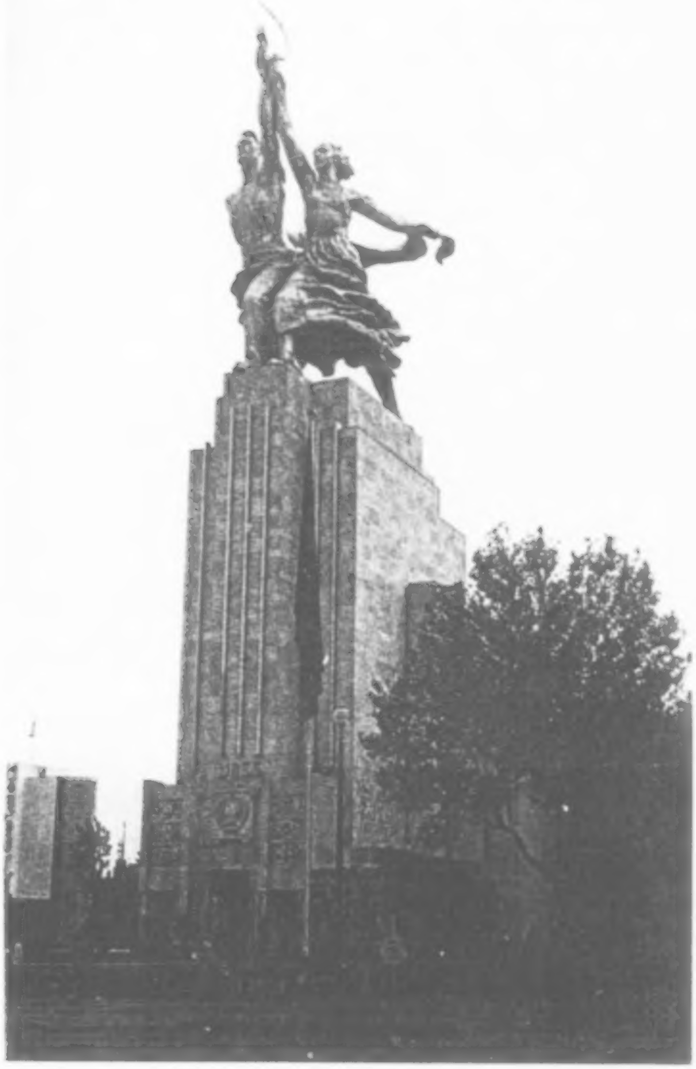

Figure 1
Vera Mukhina
Worker and Collective Farm Girl
1937
(From Spencer Golub, The Recurrence of Fate, p. 75)

industrial protectors of that nation.

During the 1920's the 'woman question' was frequently discussed, primarily but by no means exclusively by the many prominent Bolshevik women. It centred around such issues as marriage, divorce and abortion, emphasizing the need to free women from traditional patriarchal bonds. However, following Bebel and Engels, the woman question was always considered subordinate to the class question, the resolution of which would also free women.[13]

The 1926 Family Code established the foundations for what was to be a greater freedom for women, a temporary stage which would mitigate bourgeois patriarchy in the transition to communism. This was accompanied by new images of Soviet women as independent, self-sacrificing heroines, often of lower-class background, who even took up arms for their country; in the words of Richard Stites, the 'new woman' was "grim, mannish, plain, and armed."[14] The freedoms of the code as well as the new images corresponded to certain Bolshevik visions of womanhood, but in general they were both rather unpopular. If anything the code tended to lead to social breakdown by enabling men to leave families more easily, while the new images proved to be alien to a majority of the still largely peasant population, both male and female.[15]

---

[13] See Richard Stites, The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia, (Princeton, 1978), pt. 4 and Gail Lapidus, Women in Soviet Society, (Berkeley, 1978), pp. 54-94 for general discussions of the issues confronting the Bolsheviks in the 1920's.

[14] Barbara Evans Clements, 'The Birth of the New Soviet Woman,' in Gleason, et al, eds., Bolshevik Culture, pp. 226-228; Stites, 'Iconoclastic Currents in the Russian Revolution,' in ibid., p. 18.

During the 1930's the image of women was transformed. In official ideology the woman question was declared to have been solved, a position that was ritually reiterated in most major statements of stalinist success. Stalin claimed the recognition of the equality of women as one of the major achievements of the 1936 constitution.[16] This was expanded upon in the 1936 decrees on the family which repealed or altered many of the provisions of the 1926 code, making divorce more difficult and outlawing abortion. These changes were strengthened in 1944, and the decrees seem to have received mixed but generally favourable reviews from most of the population, including women.[17]

---

[15] Beatrice Farnsworth, 'Bolshevik Alternatives and the Soviet Family: The 1926 Marriage Law Debate,' in Atkinson et al, eds., Women in Russia, (Stanford, 1977), pp. 139-166; Farnsworth, 'Village Women Experience the Revolution,' in Gleason, et al, eds., Bolshevik Culture, pp. 238-260; Wendy Goldman, 'Freedom and its Consequences: The Debate on the Soviet Family Code of 1926,' in Russian History/Histoire Russe, 11:4 (1984), pp. 362-388.

[16] Stalin, 'On the Draft Constitution of the U.S.S.R.,' in Problems of Leninism, pp. 550-551. See Mary Buckley, Women and Ideology in the Soviet Union, (New York, 1989), pp. 111-113 for a discussion of this theme in society at large.

[17] Goldman, op. cit., pp. 385-388 contends that in fact many of the elements of the 1936 legislation were already there in 1926. The changes were seen as positive by women as they strengthened the ability of women to get child-support while preventing men from simply getting a divorce and leaving. See also Roberta Manning, 'Women in the Soviet Countryside on the Eve of World War II, 1935-1940,' in

The general shift to 'family values' was accompanied by a rise in images of women as mothers and wives. They reproduced the eternal Soviet nation while men produced the new, dynamic state. This led to everything from the recognition of 'hero-mothers' who had 10 or more children, to the development of the Lamaze method in order to make that child-bearing easier.[18] Especially after the war family and love became major themes in literature, and women appeared more and more frequently as heroines, although generally in roles relating to those themes.[19]

In his speech to the First All-Union Congress of Collective-Farm Shock Workers in 1933 Stalin lauded collective farm women, chastising men for playing down their importance, and stating that "[i]t is our duty to bring the women in the

---

Beatrice Farnsworth and Lynne Viola, eds., Russian Peasant Women, (Oxford, 1992), pp. 207-211. Lapidus, Women in Soviet Society, pp. 112-119 describes the changes as negative, but offers this as an objective outside assessment rather than the view of women at the time.

[18] John Bell, 'Giving Birth to the New Soviet Man: Politics and Obstetrics in the USSR,' in Slavic Review, 40:1 (1981), pp. 2-3. See Buckley, op. cit., pp. 156-157 for a discussion of the cult of motherhood.

[19] Vera Dunham, In Stalin's Time: Middleclass Values in Soviet Fiction, (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 91-104. The major exception to this was the portrayal of partisans, particularly popular in film, who were usually women. For other examples of portrayals of women in various media see Xenia Gasiorowska, Women in Soviet Fiction, 1917-1964, (Madison, 1968); Wolfgang Holz, 'Allegory and Iconography in Socialist Realist Painting,' pp. 73-84.

collective farms forward and to make use of this great force."[20] This introduced the second major way in which women served to represent the eternal Soviet nation, namely through an association with agriculture. This tied their image to themes of nature and the unchanging peasant that in different ways had great resonance in both Russian and non-Russian cultures. They were portrayed as the heart of the kolkhoz, either as labourers maintaining the national heartland, or as active, dynamic rural proletarians driving tractors. The forward-looking, dynamic image is the one used by Mukhina, but after the war it became less and less common to see representations of women in positions of power or authority.[21]

The various feminine cultural conceptions should not be understood as corresponding strictly to 'women.' Women could break the bounds of those metaphors, while on the other side men (most notably peasants and non-Russians) could be subsumed under feminine imagery. As a way of conceptualizing national identity, however, these images were extremely powerful. They formed a crucial element in historical portrayals as well. As we shall see, women appeared as representations of the eternal Soviet nation, giving it a sense of permanence and longevity. In addition the nation-as-woman was often seen in conjunction with its counterpart, the masculine, active, creative, fatherland that defended the motherland.

---

[20] Stalin, 'Speech Delivered at the First All-Union Congress of Collective-Farm Shock Workers,' [Feb. 19, 1933] in Problems of Leninism, pp. 450-451, quote p. 450.

[21] Fitzpatrick, Stalin's Peasants, pp. 220-224; Buckley, op. cit., pp. 113-115. The glorification of women's roles in the 1930's did lead to an increase in the number of women in tractor-driving, administration and other non-traditional jobs, although they were always grossly under-represented. Even so, their new status was resented by many men, and their numbers in those occupations declined significantly in the post-war period when official encouragement ended. Norton Dodge and Murray Feshbach, 'The Role of Women in Soviet Agriculture, ' in Farnsworth and Viola, eds., Russian Peasant Women, pp. 236-270; Manning, op. cit., pp. 218-219.

The clearest example of this masculine imagery and the symbolic importance of the frontier was the prominence given to border guards and border nations. Both were glorified as the defenders of the Soviet motherland and people and given a prominent place in parades and celebrations.[22] As we shall see, one of the historical themes associated with non-Russian peoples was their heroic defensive wars against outside incursions. This linked the contemporary defense of the frontier to a heroic warrior tradition that was generally portrayed in gender terms.

The point at which the male and female images joined was in the family. This was one of the dominant metaphors through which stalinist society was conceptualized. At the all-Union level it involved a portrayal of a family of nations making up the Soviet community. The head of the family was Russia (alternately masculine or feminine), with the various other nations taking their place in relation to it.[23]

---

[22] Christopher Binns, 'The Changing Face of Power: Revolution and Accommodation in the Develement of the Soviet Ceremonial System,' in Man, 14:4 (1979), pp. 602-3.

A similar schema was adopted in the portrayal of social relationships. 'Fathers' in stalinist society were Stalin, Lenin and to a lesser extent other Party leaders who had essentially achieved perfection. 'Sons' were the heroes (Stakhanovites, aviators, etc.) who were able to (never entirely) emulate the fathers, generally through some real or symbolic guidance from them.[24] Women were excluded from the realm of fathers, although they could cross gender boundaries to become one of the sons. They also frequently appeared in other contexts, such as Semion Chuikov's well-known painting 'A Daughter of Soviet Kirghizia' (fig. 2), the title of which establishes the family relationship, but one that functioned at a national level. In this scene the books held by the girl represent the enlightenment brought to the backward peoples of Kirghizia by the Russo-Soviets.[25]

The familial ties established in this fashion provided a sense of community, but also reinforced the hierarchical social order. While Russia was a benevolent parent, it could (naturally) never be supplanted from its position as the head of the Union. A similar relationship existed between fathers

---

[23] See Lowell Tillett, The Great Friendship, (Chapel Hill, 1969) for a general discussion of this theme in historical literature.

[24] Clark, The Soviet Novel, pp. 114-121, 129-135.

[25] See below for a discussion of the place of non-Slavic peoples in Soviet culture.

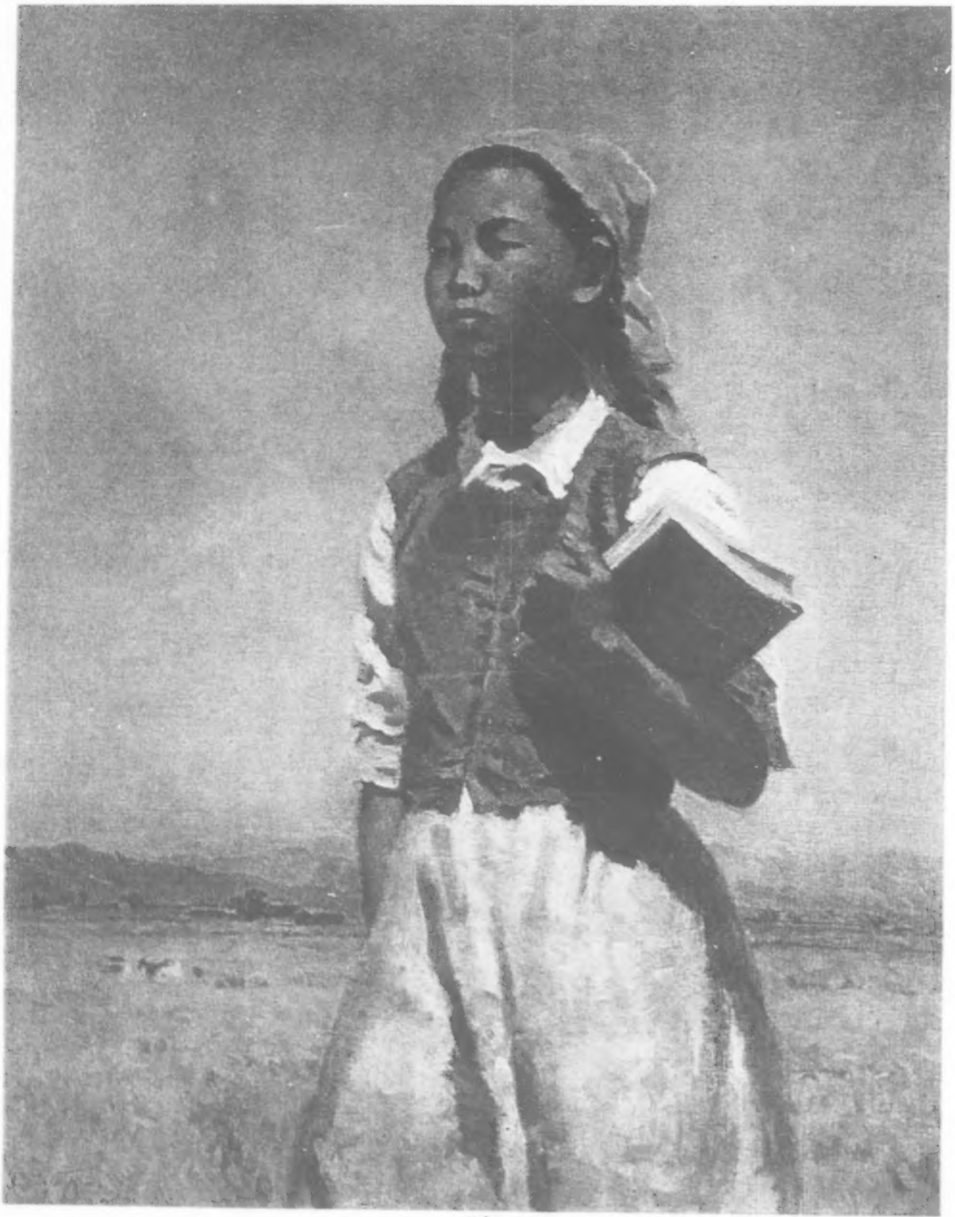

Figure 2
Semion Chuikov
A Daughter of Soviet Kirghizia
1948
(From The Tretyakov Gallery, plate 139)

and sons. The sons could achieve varying degrees of perfection *as sons*, but they could never become fathers.[26] As well, while the theme of 'family values' did accompany a greater emphasis on the nuclear family in juridical, social and cultural terms, that family was always subordinate to the primary family, the Soviet Union. Nowhere is the primacy of country over family more evident than in the case of Pavlik Morozov, who became a sort of patron saint to the Komsomol[27] for turning in his father to the authorities for anti-State activity. His deed (which ended with him being killed by his uncles) was commemorated in public monuments, meetings and in inspirational childrens books.[28]

The story of Pavlik brings us back to a consideration of the frontier and of limits in general. The deed ascribed to him was heroic in the sense that he defended his country (the external frontier), but also because he was willing and able to overcome a different kind of limit, that of (bourgeois) family ties. This second notion of limits or boundaries was in many ways an obsession of 1930's society, which constantly emphasized the power of the new Soviet people to overcome traditional limits.[29] The exemplary figure in this regard was Alexei Stakhanov. He was a coal miner who, during a shift at the end of August 1935, mined twelve times his quota of coal. This spectacular success fed the growing mania for overcoming technological and physical limits and led to the formation of the Stakhanovite movement.[30]

---

[26] Clark, The Soviet Novel., 127-129.

[27] The Communist Youth organization.

[28] Fitzpatrick, Stalin's Peasants, pp. 255-256. In reality he probably turned his father in for leaving him (at age 13 or 14) to take over as head of the household when he left with his mistress. His story was made into the film Bezhin Meadow by Eisenstein, but it was attacked throughout its production and eventually destroyed without having been released. See The Complete Films of Eisenstein, (Paris, 1972), pp. 88-97; Kenez, Cinema & Soviet Society, pp. 149-153.

Stakhanovites gained an important place in Soviet mythology. They were portrayed as heroic, almost superhuman, "new people, people of a special type."[31] The old standards of output, supported by old-style norms and people, hindered these new socialist people, but "the Stakhanov movement broke through these barriers and swept over the country."[32] This was accompanied by a general glorification of heroes who did the seemingly impossible. Aviation was another major area in which the new concern with shattering limits was expressed.

---

[29] The period of the Cultural Revolution introduced many of the heroic themes discussed here, but, as we saw in chapter 2, the intention then was to bring about massive change. The subsequent period was far more conservative in nature. Clark The Soviet Novel, pp. 76-77 cites Gladkov's 1925 novel Cement as the first example of the glorification of the unlimited potential of the revolutionary will.

[30] Siegelbaum, Stakhanovism and the Politics of Productivity in the USSR, 1935-1941, provides the best analysis of the inter-related social, cultural, political and economic facets of the movement.

[31] 'Speech of J. Stalin at the First All-Union Conference of Stakhanovites,' [1935] in Labour in the Land of Socialism: Stakhanovites in Conference, (Moscow, 1936), p. 15.

[32] Ibid., pp. 22-24, quote p. 22. See also Short Course, pp. 338-341.

During the 1930's a variety of aviation records were broken by Soviet pilots, both male and female, simultaneously glorifying socialist technological development, the heroism of the Soviet people, and the socially progressive and egalitarian nature of society.[33]

In a sense this concern with overcoming limits corresponded to the internationalist tendency of the Soviet state. The various heroes 'defeated' foreign competitors and foreign limits by mining more coal or flying higher and farther than hitherto, helping to demonstrate socialist greatness to the world. However, like internationalism, the overcoming of limits was not permitted to challenge any of the foundations of the Soviet state, serving always to reinforce the status quo.

The conservative nature of Stakhanovism can be seen in a number of ways. Stakhanov, and others generally achieved their records through a concerted effort under special conditions. In Stakhanov's case other miners performed a number of the tasks that he would normally have done himself.[34] As a result, his spectacular successes were not something that could be routinely accomplished.[35] If anything, Stakhanovite campaigns undermined work rhythms and harmed overall productivity, making them effective as inspirations or symbols but not as realistic models. Indeed, the accomplishments of Stakhanovites were often resented, not emulated, by many of their colleagues, in extreme cases leading to sabotage of their work or even physical assault.[36] This was most notably the case with agricultural Stakhanovites. They were predominantly women, and their achievements often went along with a general independence from patriarchal norms and a willingness to assert themselves, creating strong resentment among many of their fellow *kolkhozniks*.[37]

---

[33] Bailes, Technology and Society under Lenin and Stalin, pp. 381-406. The gender egalitarianism was offset to an certain extent by the different images offered for ideal men and women. The ideal male Stakhanovite, for example, was depicted as having a helpful and supportive wife, while the ideal female Stakhanovite was frequently shown as combining heroic deeds at work with the raising of a family at home. Siegelbaum, op. cit., pp. 236-242.

The concern with overcoming limits was thus not so much a way of increasing productivity as of reinforcing certain conceptions of individual and society. This functioned both on the ground (in factories, farms etc.) and at a broad cultural level. Siegelbaum contends that Stakhanovism as an institutional practice "constituted an important ingredient of the socialization of a largely peasant derived labor force. It offered a model of behavior and a set of values that workers could adopt to negotiate the difficult transition from a largely preindustrial to an industrial society."[38] Stakhanovism, and limit-breaking in general, took on different forms in the various areas of society, but the goal was always the same: to develop new, *Soviet* forms of life.

---

[34] Ibid., pp. 80-84, 190-204. In general this was reinforced by the fact that Stakhanovites were usually given better equipment and backup, thereby cementing their position as Stakhanovites and further feeding resentment (pp. 179-190).

[35] Ibid., pp. 74-75.

[36] Ibid., pp. 101-106.

[37] Fitzpatrick, Stalin's Peasants, pp. 12-13, 233, 237-238; Manning, op. cit., pp. 216, 220-222. In industry most Stakhanovites were men as they were concentrated in the more prestigious heavy industries, while women tended to work in the consumer goods sector. Siegelbaum, op. cit., pp. 179-180. See Gerasimov's painting (fig. 4) for an example of a heroic peasant woman, albeit in the context of war.

In the culture of the 1930's the accomplishments of Stakhanovites, aviators, or any of the other heroes were seen in hierarchical terms, especially relating to Stalin. He served as inspiration and as teacher for the various heroes, who in turn were portrayed or portrayed themselves as owing everything to Stalin.[39] He was the one (and the only one) who ultimately was able to overcome *all* the limits that were constraining people. This meant that only those feats that were sanctioned by his symbolic participation could be glorified, and the glory that accrued to them ultimately served to support the hierarchical social order with Stalin at the head. The cultural mythology of the period was designed for "Stakhanovites to identify their personal ambitions with those of the nation."[40]

---

[38] Ibid., p. 148.

[39] Stakhanov, for example, frequently mentioned various role-models in his autobiography, generally relating them to the supreme role-model Stalin. Ibid, p. 68-69.

The overall nature of the mania for overcoming boundaries and limits can be seen in the socialist realist aesthetic. It placed great importance on 'norm-busting' in both the production and subject-matter of artistic works, but concommitantly imposed strict and inviolable demands for artistic conformity.[41] The overcoming of limits, like internationalism, became a ritual form of cultural expression that served to reinforce the dominant social structures and practices, as well as providing a way in which individuals could express loyalty to the state and advance in society. This accompanied the general shift away from the glorification of the 'little man' and towards the promotion of elite figures.[42]

The 1930's thus saw the institution of a 'nationalized' Soviet society. The Soviet Union was still ostensibly class-based and internationalist in orientation, but in practice a frontier had been erected that formed the basis for the newly forming Soviet identity. As in any nation that border coincided with the geographical limits of the state, but, as we have seen, the notion of boundaries played a broader role in Soviet society as well. Vladimir Paperny describes the frontier in the following way:

---

[40] Ibid., p. 244. These themes run through all of stalinist culture and society, and will be referred to frequently in this paper. Aviators, for example, were always advised and inspired by Stalin, and were generally referred to as 'Stalin's falcons.' Bailes, op. cit., pp. 386-388. See also Clark, The Soviet Novel, pp. 114-129.

[41] Iampolski, 'Censorship as the Triumph of Life,' pp. 865-879.

[42] Toby Clark, 'The 'new man's' body: a motif in early Soviet culture,' pp. 40-43.

> In the 1930's the territory of the Soviet Union consisted of a series of concentric circles separating areas of different value. The state border (as well as fences around labour camps) separated 'the camp of the enemy of the working class' from the 'empire of Good.' The borders of Moscow protected Muscovites from kulaks, 'enemies of the Soviet Union.' And the walls of Kremlin [sic], to which no ordinary person had access, divided the 'sacred' and 'profane' space.[43]

One might add that in the centre of the Kremlin sat Stalin. The Soviet Union was thus set apart from the rest of the world, but was also internally divided. The notion of frontiers and limits distinguished the various segments and strata of society, as well as providing a mechanism through which those divisions were ritually reinforced.

The enclosure of the Soviet Union by a frontier was accompanied by the reconceptualization of history. A number of aspects of the new conception of history have already been discussed, however the relationship of that new history to identity is still unclear. The question may be posed thus: How were 'the Soviet people,' the immensely varied group of people(s) that resided within the borders of the U.S.S.R., conceptualized as an historically constituted 'imagined community,'[44] and in what ways did that history permeate culture and society? It is this question that will be examined from a number of perspectives in the rest of this chapter.

---

[43] Vladimir Paperny, 'Moscow in the 1930's and the Emergence of a New City,' in Gunther, ed., op. cit., p. 235.

The Nationalization of History

The various elements, contradictions and tensions that existed in Soviet identity are powerfully represented in the Komsomolskaia metro station in Moscow. The station contains two platforms, one on a radial line, the second on the ring line that links all the other metro lines. The radial station, built in 1935 on the line pointing symbolically outward, is Soviet internationalist in theme, emphasizing in its ostentatious decor the solidarity of the workers of the world. The second, begun before the war but not opened until 1952, is on the ring line that runs roughly along the path of the old wall that surrounded the inner part of Moscow. It is Soviet Russian in theme, with mosaics by Pavel Korin glorifying pre-revolutionary Russian heroes such as Alexander Nevskii, Dimitrii Donskoi and the generals Kutuzov and

---

[44] I borrow this term from Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities, (Verso, 1991), which has been helpful in working through many of the issues discussed in this paper.

Suvorov, linking them to the figures of Lenin and Stalin.[45]

A number of aspects of the stalinist conception of history evident in the station will be discussed in this chapter. One of the most important is the overlap and tension between Russian and Soviet histories. The various Russian figures are reconceptualized as proto-Soviet heroes, both through their links to Lenin and Stalin, as well as through the juxtaposition of the two stations. Stalin appears as the apotheosis of a heroic genealogy that stretches back to pre-revolutionary times. This goes along with a partial personalization of historical change. In the station on the radial line 'the masses' are the primary historical actor, however in the ring line station the individual hero dominates. Another aspect of the portrayal of history in the station is the use of folk styles, themes and images, primarily in the artwork of the ring station. The use of folklore, especially widespread in the pre-1945 period, was a powerful way in which Soviet culture was given an historical foundation. Finally, the metro itself can be seen as one of the greatest Soviet achievements. It was the product of an incredible feat of engineering, combining beauty, size and speed in an egalitarian and democratic form of transportation.

The first feature of the historical portrayal given in the metro station is the ambiguous position of Russia. Stalinist history was founded above all on the history of Russia. This involved both the widespread use of Russian themes and figures in the culture of the time (as in the Komsomolskaia station), as well as a reconceptualization of history that placed a Sovietized Russia at the centre. However, in this process the history of the other nations that made up the Soviet Union, and especially the peoples with Union republics, also played significant roles. Their histories were seen in relation to that of Russia, but their presence also served to contain Russian history, to make it Soviet.

---

[45] Tarkhanov and Kavtaradze, op. cit., p. 165.

The displacement of class by nation as the fundamental element in stalinist history occurred in the early 1930's. During the 1920's the views put forward by the Pokrovskii school had formed the basis of Bolshevik understandings of history and the nation. Pokrovskii portrayed the Russian Empire as a 'prison of nations' in which non-Russian peoples suffered a double oppression based on both class and nation. Although Tsarism had been a necessary historical stage, little good had come out of the oppressive conditions of the time. The year 1917 thus marked the fundamental dividing line between Russian imperialism and slavery, and the national freedom enjoyed in the Soviet Union. However, this national freedom was simply a corollary of the more important freedom that resulted from the resolution of the class struggle. Class remained fundamental.[46]

---

[46] M.N. Pokrovskii, 'The Prison of Nations,' in Russia in World History, (Ann Arbor, 1970 [1930]), pp. 108-116.

After 1934 the attacks on the Pokrovskii school included a rejection of his view of the Russian Empire. The shift was signalled by Stalin in his speech to the Seventeenth Party Congress in 1934. He claimed that non-Russian nationalism was as dangerous, if not more so, than Russain chauvinism.[47] This was incorporated into the historical view set forth in the Short Course, which stated that the bourgeois nationalism of the non-Russian peoples had been allowed "to grow to such an extent that it had allied itself with hostile forces, the forces of intervention, and had become a danger to the state."[48]

The shift away from the condemnation of Russian chauvinism was accompanied by a rehabilitation of pre-Revolutionary Russian history. It was founded on the concept of the 'lesser evil,' which held that Russian imperialism, while having many negative aspects, had ultimately led to the economic, social, cultural and political improvement of the non-Russian peoples, thus enabling them to reach socialism sooner.[49] This was supplemented by the notion that Russian imperialism was also justified because it protected non-Russians from the even worse threats posed by other nations.[50]

---

[47] Stalin, 'Report to the Seventeeth Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B.),' in Problems of Leninism, pp. 506-507.

[48] Short Course, pp. 320-322, quote p. 322.

[49] Konstantin F. Shteppa, 'The "Lesser Evil" Formula,' in C. E. Black, ed., Rewriting Russian History, pp. 107-120; Mazour, op. cit., pp. 150-151, 155-158. See A.M. Pankratova, A History of the U.S.S.R., (Moscow, 1947), vol. 3, pp. 13-16 for a Soviet view.

Although the demonstration that Russia was historically more progressive than the other peoples of the Empire served to justify historical Russian domination of non-Russian peoples, it did not address Russia's complicity in class oppression. In order to free Russia from this guilt a view developed by Pokrovskii near the end of his life was brought into play. He had put forward a modified conception of imperialism which portrayed Russia as an unequal or junior partner among imperialist nations, with overall policy being determined primarily in western Europe, the U.S. and Japan.[51] This formulation was adopted in the Short Course, which stated that "before 1914 the most important branches of Russian industry were in the hands of foreign capitalists," a situation that "chained tsardom to British and French imperialism and converted Russia into a tributary, a semi-colony of these countries."[52]

These views served as a justification for the sovietization of Russian history and for the rehabilitation of the history of the Empire. The negative aspects of Russian history could be ascribed to foreign, bourgeois influences in much the same way that contemporary problems were seen as the result of sabotage or wrecking by agents of foreign powers. As the representative of the most progressive historical forces, the history of Russia became intertwined with the development of the class struggle. National and class history became identical.

---

[50] S. Velychenko, 'Restructuring and the non-Russian Past,' in Nationalities Papers, 22:2, pp. 325-326.

[51] George Enteen et al, Soviet Historians and the Study of Russian Imperialism, (University Park, 1979), pp. 23-25.

[52] Short Course, p. 162. Mazour, op. cit., pp. 156-158 traces the various historical debates surrounding the question.

The shift in the conception of imperialism was important in a number of ways. It allowed for the recovery of much of pre-revolutionary Russian history, as well as certain aspects of non-Russian histories. In their cases the most significant impact was the gradual shift in emphasis away from national(ist) histories and towards a more Russo-centric conception of their pasts. However, there was also a seeming contradiction inherent in these views. Following the new conception of imperialism one would assume that the intervention of European nations, being more advanced in the Marxist sense, would have been progressive. This was not the case. Integration into the Russian economy was portrayed as positive, but integration into the world economy was not, while French and Polish occupation of parts of the Russian Empire, unlike Russian occupation of non-Russian areas, was likewise seen as regressive.[53] This conception of history was evidently not class-based. Historical portrayals continued to ritually cloak their images of the past in class garb, but a form of nation had largely replaced class as the primary historical actor.

---

[53] Velychenko, 'Restructuring and the non-Russian Past,' pp. 325-326.

A parallel can be drawn here with Balibar's conception of the nation-state. He describes it as instituting a 'fictive ethnicity,' a notion of community that ascribes one and only one ethnic identity to its members and which is then given a collective historical identity. That fictive ethnicity has two elements, both 'imagined.' The first is language, a community created through various cultural institutions (most notably the school). The language community is theoretically open to all, and thus "is a community *in the present*, which produces the feeling that it has always existed, but which lays down no destiny for the successive generations."[54] "For [the national community] to be tied down to the frontiers of a particular people, it therefore needs an extra degree of particularity, or a principle of closure, of exclusion." That closure is provided by race, which gives a biological or spiritual unity to the nation that can then be projected onto the past.[55]

In the case of the stalinist Soviet Union the open community was not based on language but on class. Theoretically anyone or any nation could join the Soviet community through a resolution of their class struggle.

---

[54] Balibar, op. cit., pp. 96-99, quote p. 99. For Balibar the linguistic community is without a history in the same way that it is without a destiny.

[55] Ibid., pp. 99-100, quote p. 99.

During the 1920's this served as the foundation of the Soviet state. Closure was provided during the Stalin period by geography. The bounding of the class state meant that it was no longer *any* moves towards the resolution of the class struggle that were seen as progressive, but only moves that led to the *Soviet* resolution. In this sense the Revolution became the only true measure of historical worth. Like race, however, Soviet 'geographical' nationalism, through its relationship to the Revolution, took on a spiritual or transcendent quality that dovetailed with certain other national forms (predominantly but not exclusively Russian) and that created a notion of community that was very similar to Balibar's 'fictive ethnicity.'

The history that emerged from this new Soviet community was essentially factionalism writ large. "All oppressed and progressive classes of all ages and nations were united by Stalinist culturology into a single notion of "the people.""[56] That progressiveness was determined in relation to the ever-changing present. Ultimately the history of the Party was nationalized and portrayed as a tale of struggle between the forces of good (Soviet) and evil (foreign).[57]

---

[56] Groys, The Total Art of Stalinism, p. 46.

[57] The distinction could take on classically ethnic characteristics, either through the promotion of specific peoples (Russian and non-Russian) or in negative manifestations such as the anti-cosmopolitan campaign of Stalin's last years which focussed on the eternal 'foreigner' the Jew. In general however these tendencies were inscribed within a Soviet symbolic order.

The projection of the Soviet Union onto the past enabled the factional view of history to be applied to all periods. The struggle between good and evil evident in the Short Course was mapped onto the pre-revolutionary past, again emphasizing the primacy of the Soviet frontier. By the second half of the 1930's Soviet history was no longer considered to have *begun* with the revolution, only to have *centred* on it. Instead, 'Soviet' history was expanded to include everything that had occurred on the territory of the Union at any time in history. Pankratova's widely read high school text on the history of the USSR, for example, began with "[t]he earliest squatting places of man in our country" at the end of the ice-age and continued up to the present.[58] The sovietization of history implied the subordination of *all* difference, both contemporary and historical, to that of the frontier of the Soviet Union. Class struggle was ritually invoked in historical accounts, but that struggle coincided almost entirely with the struggle of Soviets (including those who lived on the territory of the Soviet Union prior to 1917) with any enemy.[59] A Soviet nation was born.

---

[58] Pankratova, op. cit., quotation on p. 14. The contrast with Pokrovskii's Brief History of Russia, (2 vols.), (London, 1933) is marked. He states that "Man made his appearance in the East European plain at a time when all its northern half was covered with a thick sheet of ice" (p. 37). Unlike in Pankratova's work 'country' does not appear, let alone the possesive 'our.'

[59] See Mehnert, op. cit., pp. 26, 103-104 and Mazour, op. cit., p. 104.

Russia

The centrality of Russian history within the history of the Soviet Union was played down in the 1930's. While many of the major themes and figures that dominated Soviet history were either Russian or centred on Russia, they, as well as the histories of non-Russian peoples, were generally referred to as Soviet. This was evident in the portrayal of the Empire. Russian rule was seen as having been ultimately progressive, but this was combined with a continued emphasis on its negative consequences. Over the course of the 1941-45 war this interpretation changed significantly. By 1945 most of those condemnations had been purged from the historical record, leaving Russia largely blameless.[60] The war thus marked the high point of the resurgence of Russian history, an examination of which can give us a clearer picture of the extent to which Soviet history was in fact Russian.

The war saw a massive increase in Russian nationalism in general, and in the portrayal of a positive, heroic Russian history in particular. A number of non-Russian areas were quickly lost to the Germans, while the Central Asian republics were not directly threatened. This, combined with the largely Russian makeup of the armed forces, made the mobilization of the *Russian* population a key concern for the government. In addition, the disruption of war undermined much of the strong central control over the country, leading to the rise of many previously suppressed institutions and traditions.

---

[60] Tillett, The Great Friendship, pp. 358-359, 362-364. He emphasizes the extent to which the Party had to intervene strongly to force historians to accept the benign nature of Russian rule.

While the war did give Russia and Russian history a much more prominent role in the culture of the period, it is not clear to what extent this can be seen as a 'victory' of Russia and Russian identity over the Soviet. This becomes especially problematic when the post-war legacy of the changes is examined. Nevertheless, it is clear that Russian history came to play a much more prominent and positive role in Soviet history than prior to the war.

One of the most powerful exponents of the new emphasis on Russian history was the writer Alexei Tolstoy, whose writing can serve as an excellent if somewhat extreme example of some of the overall trends. He was a well known pre-war writer whose novel Peter the First was the only widely popular historical novel dealing with the pre-revolutionary period, and was made into a successful film.[61] During the war he was one of a handful of major writers who became correspondents and whose work was published and read throughout the Soviet

---

[61] Alexei Tolstoy, Peter the First, (New York, 1959). Stites, Russian Popular Culture, p. 68. Many novels of the 1930's gave a prominent role to pre-revolutionary themes or figures in the context of their stories, making that history widely known, however Tolstoy's novel was the only popular work *specifically* dealing with pre-revolutionary history.

Union.[62]

In an essay written in July, 1942 Tolstoy laid out his conception of the history of Russia.[63] He called for a reconsideration of historical interpretation because, in his view, the prevailing historical views "remain saturated with German lies" and "the hero of our school-books still remains the representative of the German 'master race.'"[64] The need to rethink history is of utmost importance since the lies are part of "a vast strategic plan for the conquest and enslavement of the world by the German Reich."[65]

In order to overcome this alleged historical misrepresentation Tolstoy portrays twelve hundred years of struggle between Russia and Germany, considered explicitly as the result of the inherent German need for *lebensraum*.[66] In cultural terms Tolstoy stresses the contrast between the uncouth Germans and the advanced Russians through a series of historical parallels. For example, the Goths (Germans) destroyed Rome and western civilization, plunging Europe into centuries of darkness, while Russia preserved and enriched Byzantine culture.[67]

---

[62] Louise McReynolds, 'Dateline Stalingrad: Newspaper Correspondents at the Front,' in Stites, ed., Culture and Entertainment, p. 34; Giuseppe Boffa, The Stalin Phenomenon, (Ithaca, 1992 [1982]), pp. 49-50; John Dunlop, The Faces of Contemporary Russian Nationalism, (Princeton, 1983), pp. 20-22. Others included Ilya Ehrenburg, Konstantin Simonov and Vasilii Grossman.

[63] Alexei Tolstoy, 'The Making of Russia,' in The Making of Russia, (London, n.d.), pp. 5-35.

[64] Ibid., pp. 6-7.

[65] Ibid., p. 5.

[66] Ibid., pp. 13-14. This was not the dominant view of Germans in the early part of the war. In *Pravda* for example ordinary Germans, including soldiers, were portrayed as unwitting or unwilling accessories to evil Nazi policies. Jeffrey Brooks, '*Pravda* Goes to War,' in Stites, ed., Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia, pp. 19-20. It was only in the later stages of the war that *all* Germans were portrayed as evil, and that revenge became a major theme.

In Tolstoy's historical schema the Great Patriotic War was simply a continuation of this centuries-long struggle.[68] Nevertheless, this titanic struggle was also placed in a Soviet historical context. While *Russia* saved Byzantine culture, the Germans in fact stole what culture they do possess from the *Soviets*. The Soviet claim of historical continuity with all the peoples who had lived on the territory of the USSR enables them to state that the Scythians were proto-Soviets. With this in mind Tolstoy claims that when the savage Goths conquered the Scythians they appropriated their culture, a view which serves to negate any German achievement and to emphasize Soviet greatness.[69]

---

[67] Ibid., pp. 18-19. Soviet historiography in general tended to deny the existence of any significant Byzantine influence on Russia, instead emphasizing Russian influence on, and preservation of, Byzantine culture. Ihor Sevcenko, 'Byzantine Cultural Influences,' in Black, ed., Rewriting Russian History, pp. 143-197. Mehnert, op. cit., (London, 1952), pp. 40-41.

[68] This was a theme in all of his wartime writing. See the selections given in The Making of Russia.

[69] Ibid., pp. 10-11. The Scythians had long been popular, as the earlier discussion of Pilnyak and the Scythian movement in the 1920's indicates. The Soviets drew a number of other historical parallels with the Scythians, most notably that

This was the view that dominated Soviet society throughout the war, beginning with Stalin's July 1941 speech in which he drew the first tentative historical parallels.[70] He elaborated on this in a major speech given on November 7, 1941, which ended with the invocation of six great Russian heroes. "Let yourself be inspired in this war by the manly image of our great ancestors--Alexander Nevskii, Dmitrii Donskoi, Kuzma Minin, Dmitrii Pozharsky, Alexander Suvorov, Mikhail Kutuzov! Let yourself be blessed by the victorious banner [or standard] of the great Lenin!"[71]

Stalin's exhortation was taken to heart, with all these figures gaining prominent places in wartime culture and society. By early 1942 popular pamphlets on all six heroes had been published and widely distributed throughout the Soviet Union.[72] Suvorov, Kutuzov and Nevsky all gave their names to military awards introduced in 1942, followed by

---

they practiced scorched-earth policies in warfare, providing an historical justification for Soviet tactics, as well as portraying them not as a people, but as a federation of peoples, demonstrating the long history of the 'friendship among peoples' that prevailed in the present.

[70] Stalin, 'Vystuplenie po radio, 3 iulia 1941 goda,' in Sochineniia, vol. 2, p. 2.

[71] Stalin, 'Rech na Krasnoi Ploshchadi, 7 noiabria 1941 g.,' in Sochineniia, p. 35. This provides another example of the gendered nature of Soviet historical imagery.

[72] Tillett, op. cit., p. 64.

Ushkalov and Nakhimov in 1943.[73] These linked past and present glories, establishing a heroic genealogy through which historical figures prefigured and inspired the present. A popular poster produced by the Kukryniksy in 1941 (fig. 3) contained all of these themes, portraying stern advancing Soviet soldiers with the shadowy figures of Nevskii, Suvorov and the Civil War hero Chapaev urging them on. The caption established the genetic linkages, stating "[g]randchildren of Suvorov and children of Chapaev, let's beat the hell out of them."[74]

This poster provides a powerful example of socialist realist art. The voice of the past speaks in an unmediated fashion to both the soldiers in the picture and the viewer. This was common throughout the culture of the period. In Korneichuk's play *The Front*, for example, one character admonishes another to "remember, Suvorov always said: 'You

---

[73] Tolstoy promoted them in his essay. See 'The Making of Russia,' p. 35; also Brooks, *op. cit*., pp. 21-22. A newsreel announcing the awards had the commentator exhorting people to "[m]aintain the purity of the traditions of Russian arms" over a scene of Zhukov visiting Suvorov's grave. D. W. Spring, 'Soviet newsreel and the Great Patriotic War,' in Nicholas Pronay and Spring, eds., *Propaganda, Politics and Film, 1918-1945*, (London, 1982), p. 282.

[74] 'Kukryniksy' was the name taken by a group of three painters who were the most prominent creators of propaganda posters through to the Brezhnev era. Kukryniksy, *Po Vragam Mira!*, (Moscow, 1982), pp. 5-7. The caption was by Samuil Marshak. (p. 17) See chapter 1 for a discussion of the importance of genealogies in the stalinist conception of history.

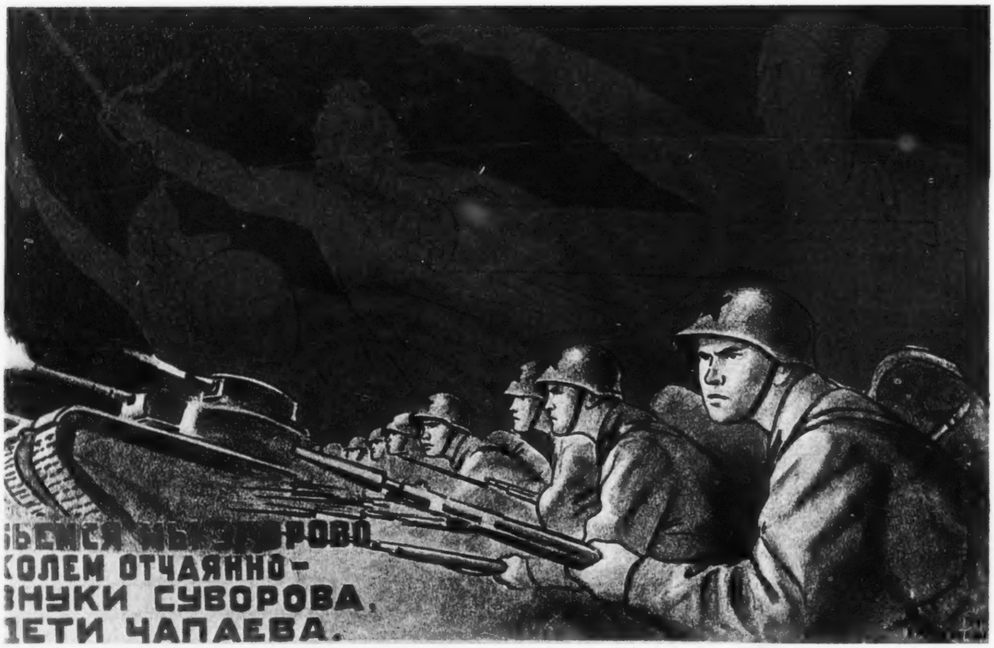
ЬЕМСЯ [illegible] РОВО,
КОЛЕМ ОТЧАЯННО -
НУКИ СУВОРОВА,
ЕТИ ЧАПАЕВА.

Figure 3
Kukryniksy
1941
(From Po Vragam Mira!, p. 17)

must fight with skill, not with numbers.'"[75] Again Suvorov speaks directly to the present.

The role of Russian heroes in wartime culture was paralleled by the timeless, heroic Russian *narod*. Tolstoy describes "[t]he Russian soldier Ivan [who] was the same fellow who for ten centuries had valiantly defended his country against all kinds of heathen and Christian hordes attacking it from east and west." Suvorov in this context was a great Russian who "had bequeathed his heart and glory to the soldier Ivan."[76]

The heroic Russian soldier was one aspect of the *narod*, but more frequently it was represented by women.[77] In Simonov's play The Russians, the male hero talks of an abstract country which he is serving, emphasizing the themes of heroic defense discussed above. The female hero provides a contrast to this, stating that "people talk of their country and they probably imagine something very big. But I don't."

---

[75] Alexander Korneichuk, The Front in Four Soviet War Plays, (London, 1959), p. 13. Felix Oinas, 'Folklore Activities and Scholarship in Russia,' in Oinas, Essays on Russian Folklore and Mythology, (Columbus, 1984), pp. 149-150 describes a number of examples in which pre-revolutionary heroes appear to aid Soviet troops during the war in Soviet folklore, a popular medium for the transmission of historical themes and figures as well as a reference to the *narod* (people).

[76] Tolstoy, 'Russians and Germans,' [Nov. 5, 1942] in The Making of Russia, p. 45.

[77] See Stites, Russian Popular Culture, pp. 100, 111-112 for a discussion of the importance of images of women during the war.

Her country consists of her family's cottage on the edge of a town, with "a river and two birch-trees" between which she had put up a swing.[78] This invokes many of the female images discussed earlier: family, rural life, nature.

The classic historical portrayal of women-as-nation came in Eisenstein's film Aleksander Nevskii.[79] In one of the more gripping scenes proto-Fascist Teutonic knights[80] are shown throwing babies onto a fire as their mothers weep and try vainly to stop them. The symbolism is obvious. Evil knights (nazis) are ravaging the great Russian mother(land), waiting desperately for Nevskii (Stalin) to come and save them and their children, the future of the nation. Sergei Gerasimov's famous painting 'Mother of a Partisan' (fig. 4) likewise contains all of these themes. It depicts a stolid,

---

[78] Konstantin Simonov, The Russians, in Four Soviet War Plays, p. 143. Another example is Gerasimov's painting 'Mother of a Partisan.'

[79] The film was produced in 1939 under strict Party supervision, briefly released, then pulled from distribution after the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. It was re-released after the Nazi invasion and became one of the classic war films. Marie Seton, Sergei M. Eisenstein, (London, 1952), pp. 379-380.

[80] The comparison of Teutonic knights with Nazis was common during the war. Eisenstein stated in 1939 that "[j]ust as the hounds of fascism are tearing to shreds Czechoslovakian culture...so did the Teuton knights of the thirteenth century eradicate everything which each nation or nationality possessed and treasured as its own..." Quoted in ibid., pp. 397-398. A popular war-time song drew the same link, referring to an enemy officer first as a Teutonic knight, then as a fascist. Robert A. Rothstein, 'Homeland, Home Town, and Battlefield: The Popular Song,' in Stites, ed., Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia, p. 81.

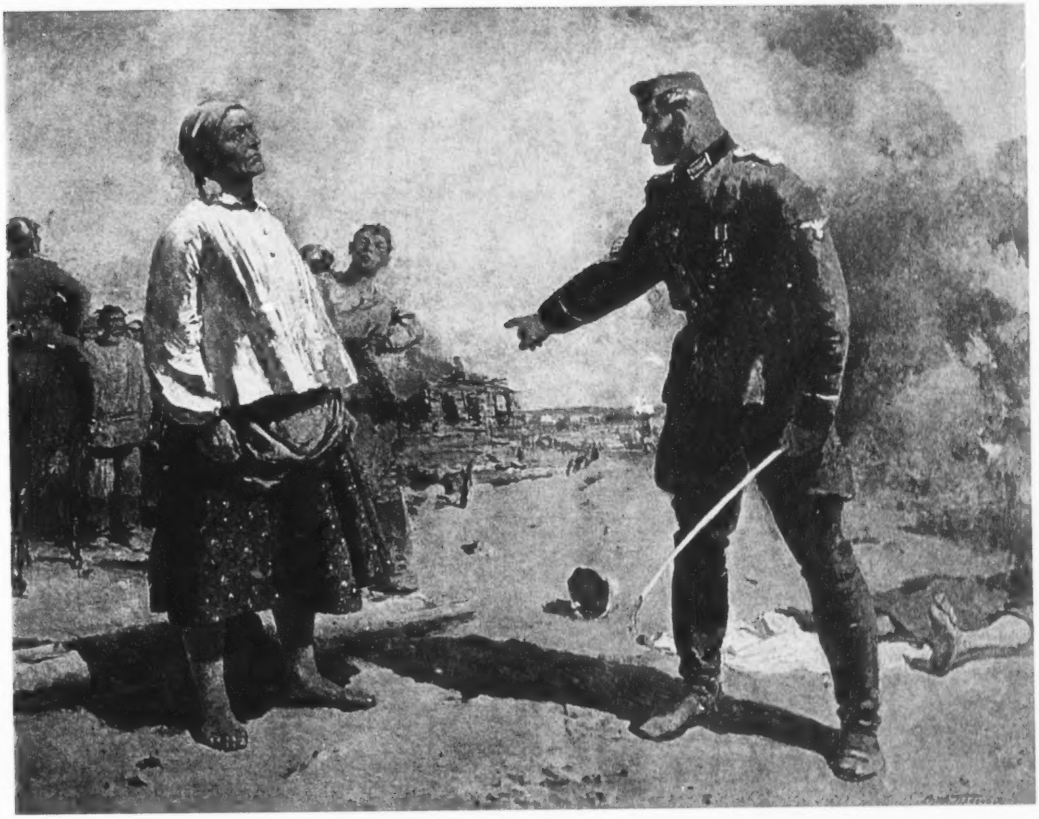

Figure 4
Sergei Gerasimov
Mother of a Partisan
1943-1950
(From The Tretyakov Gallery, plate 131)

courageous woman facing down an evil Nazi as her village burns in the background. Gerasimov wrote that his purpose was "to embody in the image of a mother, a Russian peasant woman, the Russian people's indomitable staunchness and greatness of soul in the struggle against the Nazi invaders."[81]

Few of the portrayals of women were as clear-cut as those in the film however. The identification of an organic nation with women did not preclude the portrayal of women in other roles. One of the most powerful symbols of the war was Zoia Kosmodemianskaia, a partisan fighter who allegedly burned down a barn full of German soldiers in 1942, an act for which she was hung.[82] Her image was found throughout the culture of the following years. Newspapers published the photo of her dead body lying in the snow. The Kukryniksy rushed to the scene of her death, rapidly producing a tragic painting of her hanging.[83] This culminated in the 1944 film Zoia.

All of the renditions of her life and fate portrayed her as a sort of Soviet saint. Historical parallels were constantly emphasized, comparing her to such figures as Ivan Susanin, an ancient Russian 'partisan,' as well as to Soviet heroes like the aviator Chkalov. As was the case with aviators, she was also portrayed as being inspired by Stalin.[84] While Zoia was the greatest of the female war heroes, most portrayals of women in action contain similarly heroic elements. A nurse in the play The Front, for example, comes into the trenches and urges on a soldier, blowing kisses for luck. This nurturing is important, but she then risks her life by crawling out in front of the trenches to try to rescue some soldiers.[85]

---

[81] Quoted in The Tretyakov Gallery, (New York, 1979), p. 274.

[82] In fact, she probably did not do what was claimed of her. She was possibly in the process of burning down a village as part of Stalin's 'scorched earth' policy, and may in fact have been killed by enraged Russian villagers. Rosalinde Sartorti, 'On the Making of Heroes, Heroines, and Saints,' in Stites, ed., Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia, pp. 188-190.

[83] See The Tretyakov Gallery, plate 133. The 1942 version was altered in 1947 to remove the tragic elements, depicting Tania (the name assumed by Zoia) as undaunted and confident even as she stands on the scaffold (p. 278).

The rise of the notion of a timeless Russian people and a monumental Russian history is evident in the revival of interest in pre-revolutionary historians. During the 1920's their work had been rejected as bourgeois pseudo-science because they did not conceive of history in terms of the class struggle, but gave a prominent role to the state and to individuals.[86] During the 1930's these sins were forgiven and the works of a number of those historians were reincorporated and reconceived as proto-Soviet works.

---

[84] Sartorti, 'On the Making of Heroes, Heroines, and Saints,' pp. 182-186; Stites, Russian Popular Culture, pp. 99, 114-115; Jan Leyda, Kino, (Princeton, 1983 [first edition, 1960]), p. 379. Both during and after the war partisans, especially women, were a very popular subject of films. Kenez, Cinema & Soviet Society, pp. 196-199.

[85] Korneichuk, The Front, pp. 46-48. The imagery is similar to that in Gerasimov's work.

[86] Mazour, op. cit., p. 11; Enteen, The Soviet Scholar-Bureaucrat, p. 47.

The major figure in this regard was Kliuchevskii, the most accomplished of the pre-revolutionary historians. After the anti-Pokrovskii purges his works were extensively reprinted and were even translated into Ukrainian and Belorussian. The prominent historian Nikolai Rubinshtein (later also purged) in 1937 referred to him as "one of the most talented representatives of our bourgeois inheritance, whom we must study systematically in the process of creating our own Marxist-Leninist science."[87] Two of his students (Bakrushin in 1942 and Iakovlev in 1943) even went on to win Stalin Prizes.[88]

Perhaps the best example of the broad impact of Kliuchevskii comes in Konstantin Simonov's immensely popular novel Days and Nights which deals with the battle of Stalingrad.[89] At the height of the attack on the city, German shells blow a number of books out of a building, including Kliuchevskii's 5-volume History of Russia, the only one mentioned by name. Saburov, the hero of the novel, takes time out every day to read a little bit of it, joking with his men that "he would consider himself lucky if the siege continued until he could finish the fifth volume."[90]

---

[87] Robert Byrnes, 'Soviet Historians Views of Kliuchevskii,' in Canadian-American Slavic Studies, 20:3-4 (1986), p. 441. Ironically Rubinshtein's downfall was a result of the publication of his Russian Historiography in 1941 which was condemned for claiming that Marxism was a continuation of bourgeois science and for placing too much emphasis on foreign influence on Russia. Mazour, op. cit., pp. 26-30.

[88] Byrnes, 'Soviet Historians Views of Kliuchevskii,' p. 451.

[89] Stites, Russian Popular Culture, p. 102 cites it and Fadeev's The Young Guard (1945) as the most popular of the novels released during the war.

In the context of the novel the symbolism of this event is clear. Throughout the story Russian history plays a significant role. A number of historical figures and events are invoked, linking the battle for Stalingrad to the trials and glories of past Russian history and the indomitable Russian spirit. In addition, Saburov is more than simply an actor in this drama; he himself had matriculated in history "with a brilliance which surprised all who knew him."[91] In this sense Saburov is like a little Stalin who, as was discussed in chapter 1, was both the maker and the writer of history.

Saburov's debt to Stalin is later made clear in a long discussion of the inspiration which he received from Stalin's July 3, 1941 radio speech.[92] This consistent reference to Stalin was, as we have seen, common in many forms of cultural expression. Especially in the case of military tales the model for the hero is the folkloric *bogatyr*, representing the primal, anti-authoritarian, unconquerable hero who, like the Stakhanovites, could overcome limits through an act of will. In stalinist culture this *bogatyr* was always portrayed in a subordinate relationship to Stalin, the arch-*bogatyr*. In this sense it fed into the ritualized overcoming of limits, while never challenging the social hierarchy.[93]

---

[90] Konstantin Simonov, Days and Nights, (New York, 1945 [1944]), p. 113.

[91] Ibid., p. 66.

[92] Ibid., pp. 263-267. For the text of the speech see Stalin, 'Vystuplenie po Radio, 3 iulia 1941 goda,' in Sochineniia, vol. 2, pp. 1-10. In the speech Stalin cites the failed invasions of Russia by Napoleon and the Germans in the "first imperialist war" as historical inspirations (p. 2), but overall he emphasizes Soviet over Russian themes. This changed later in the war.

In this context Kliuchevskii's History of Russia falls out of the sky. It stands in for Russian history as a whole, demonstrating by its survival of the German shelling the indestructible nature of Russia in both past and present. From a symbol of Russian strength it then becomes the inspiration which can help lead Saburov and the Soviet army to (an historically inevitable) victory, an example so powerful that even when things look their darkest it is possible to joke about prolonging the siege in order to finish reading it. Kliuchevskii's history in this case is similar to the Short Course, simultaneously containing and creating Russian history.

The importance of history is underlined in another incident in the novel as well. In hospital recovering from a serious wound Saburov meets his opposite, a lieutenant who lost a leg in the battle. He too was an historian, but one who had worked on a history of Germany. That history was now off limits for him. As he puts it: "I can't work on their history; I can't do it after all I've seen and all I've lost."[94] The Germans have taken his leg and his livelihood and, in the spirit of factionalism, German history, like the Germans, becomes a mortal enemy that cannot be touched.

---

[93] Katerina Clark, The Soviet Novel, pp. 138-141; Toby Clark, op. cit., pp. 44-46. The relationship between Saburov and Stalin can also be read in family terms (father and son). See above.

It is clear from this discussion that Russian history, along with Russian nationalism, played a significant role in the culture and society of war-time Soviet Union. However, it is important not to overstate its impact. In part this resurgence was a product of relaxed government controls over many areas of society. In his study of *Pravda* during the war, for example, Jeffrey Brooks emphasizes the extent to which the war broke through the tightly organized controls surrounding this most Soviet of institutions, opening its pages "to new voices and new images of soldiers, partisans, civilians, and citizens."[95] Alongside the traditional stalinist emphasis on fulfilling state-sponsored tasks grew a "new patriotism [that] was not primarily about revenge but about independent self-motivated citizens fighting in defense of families, friends, and native land."[96]

---

[94] Simonov, Days and Nights, pp. 208-210, quote p. 209. This view represents a significant shift from the early part of the war when the German people were distinguished from the Nazis, the true culprits. For example, on Feb. 23, 1942 Stalin stated that "[t]he experience of history shows that Hitlers come and go, but the German people and the German state remain." *Sochineniia*, vol. 2, p. 42.

[95] Brooks, op. cit., p. 9.

The new spontaneous patriotism was not focussed solely on Russia. Brooks looked at a broad sample of *Pravda* articles and found that "Russian nationalism as distinct from a more Soviet nationalism accounts for less than five percent of the articles for the entire war, with a high of four percent in 1941-42."[97] This was especially the case nearer to the end of the war when such propaganda instruments as newsreels began to criticize 'bourgeois' trends, including nationalism,[98] and would seem to indicate that specifically Russian nationalism was not as prevalent or as deep-seated as is generally assumed. The more explicit manifestations of Russian nationalism (as opposed to the independent patriotism described by Brooks) also coincided to a large extent with the interests of the state. It was thus relatively easily contained after the war, requiring only a purging of the more heterogeneous and subversive elements to be subordinated to a larger Soviet history.

Non-Russians

The development of non-Russian histories followed a somewhat different path than the Russian. Most of the non-Russian peoples did not have a strong historical tradition, while those that did (most notably the Ukrainians) had written national(ist) histories that could not easily be absorbed into the new Soviet conception of history. This was the case with historians such as Hrushevskii whose works were, as was discussed in chapter 2, anathemized by the government in the early 1930's. Given the centrality of Russian history, the place and interpretation of the histories of non-Russian peoples was always considered in relation to it. Nevertheless, that Russia was, as the previous section indicates, a profoundly Soviet entity.

---

[96] Ibid., p. 14-19, quote p. 19.

[97] Ibid., p. 21, fn. 61.

[98] Spring, op. cit., p. 287-288.

One of the major debates that took place during the 1930's was over the question of the status of Kievan Rus'. The centrality of Russian history inevitably led to a debate over the origins of the Russian state, the central question of which revolved around Kiev. Hrushevskii had contended that Kievan Rus' was an exclusively Ukrainian state. This was rejected by Soviet historians who considered it to have been the fount of Russian and White Russian culture as well as Ukrainian.[99] B. D. Grekov, the leading Soviet historian of the period, also emphasized that Kievan Rus' was a fully formed state that owed little to non-Slavic influences, thus emphasizing the autonomy of Slavo-Soviet culture and society.[100] This debate came in the context of a limited revival of pan-Slavist themes, a revival that expanded massively during the war.[101]

---

[99] Mackiw, 'The Development of Ukrainian Historiography,' pp. 67-68; Mazour, op. cit., pp. 54-57; Enteen, The Soviet Scholar-Bureaucrat, p. 70; Roman Szporluk, 'History and Russian Ethnocentrism,' in Edward Allworth, ed., Ethnic Russia in the USSR, (New York, 1980), pp. 43-44.

The new emphasis on East Slavic unity led to a reconceptualization of Ukrainian history, with a new set of heroes and villains.[102] The greatest Ukrainian figure in the stalinist context was Bogdan Khmel'nitskii who had overthrown Polish rule and had sworn allegiance to the Russian Tsar at Pereiaslavl in 1654. He was rehabilitated in the late 1930's and given great prominence during the war. He fit perfectly into the stalinist conception of history, both as a fighter against outside incursions onto Soviet territory, and as an early example of the friendship that had (always) existed between the Soviet peoples. Pankratova depicts him asking the assembled Ukrainian people to select a ruler under whom they want to live, to which "[t]housands of voices replied: "We will (*i.e.,* wish) to be under the Eastern tsar.""[103] A number of other military heroes such as Minin and Pozharskii and Nikolai Shchors were also glorified, both in Ukraine and throughout the Union.[104]

---

[100] Alexander Vucinich, 'The First Russian State,' in Black, ed., Rewriting Russian History, pp. 123-128.

[101] Mehnert, op. cit., pp. 77-78.

[102] I largely ignore Belorus' in this section as its history tended to be subordinated to that of Russia.

[103] Pankratova, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 216-223, quote p. 221. Tillett, op. cit., pp. 75-76, 412.

The writer Taras Shevchenko, who had resided in St. Petersburg form much of his life and who also wrote in Russian, was another 'good' Ukrainian. In the play Guerrillas of the Ukrainian Steppes, for example, his name is invoked in much the same way as that of Suvorov in The Front. The brigade portrayed in the story is named after him, and the soldiers go into battle with the exhortation "[f]orward, descendants of Shevchenko! For our freedom, our land, our honour, and our country!"[105]

As in any area of Soviet history, the good was always accompanied by the bad. The nationalist leader Simon Petlura, for example, was depicted as an 'imperialist lackey,' while the anarchist Nestor Makhno, who fought against nearly everyone, was likewise condemned. His case was interesting since in many ways he could not be made to conform to the factionalist view of history. His anarchic exploits led him to conclude peace briefly with the Bolsheviks, but ultimately to fight them as well. Perhaps as a result of his ambiguous status he was a prominent target of vilification and ridicule. The Kukryniksy produced a caricature of the 'bandit Makhno,' he was the subject of 1937's operetta Wedding at Malinovka, and was commonly the butt of jokes in the circus.[106]

---

[104] Ewa Thompson, 'Nationalist Propaganda in the Soviet Russian Press, 1939-41,' in Slavic Review, 50:2 (1991), p. 393.

[105] Alexander Korneichuk, Guerrillas of the Ukrainian Steppes in Four Soviet War Plays, p. 208. An epic film based on his life was also made during the war. Kenez, op. cit., p. 202.

During the 1930's pan-Slavic themes were muted and were always placed within the general context of the ambiguous nature of Russian imperialism. It was seen as objectively progressive, but a great deal of emphasis was placed on the destructive aspects of Russian rule. This was even more the case for non-Slavic peoples. Revolts against Russian rule in pre-revolutionary times continued to be portrayed as positive movements even though that rule had ultimately led to the national freedom enjoyed in the Soviet Union.[107]

During the war the emphasis began to change. As we have seen, Russian imperialism began to lose its oppressive connotations, leading to a new conception of anti-Russian revolts. They began to be portrayed in a negative light, with the focus shifting from a glorification of national struggles for liberation to one of blame for specific people or groups who were misleading the people and trying to gain power for themselves.

The new national heroes among the non-Slavic peoples were the ones who had led fights against various incursions from outside the borders of the Soviet Union.[108] During the war each union republic had at least one epic film dedicated to a national hero, including the Georgian Georgii Saakadze, the Azerbaidzhani Arshin-Mal-Alan, and the Armenian David Bek. The emphasis was always on the friendship among peoples and the fight against external enemies, with *David Bek*, for example, demonstrating that the Armenians had always depended on their alliance with Russia.[109] The portrayal of struggles against foreign invasions was not limited to the nations that made up the contemporary Soviet Union. The Soviet 'geographical nationalism' enabled them to claim the Scythians as proto-Soviets, which led Pankratova to portray "the Scythian people's struggle for independence from the Greek enslavers" in much the same terms as more recent events.[110]

---

[106] Stites, Russian Popular Culture, pp. 57-58, 79-81. The caricature of Makhno can be found in Helen Rubissow, The Art of Russia, (New York, 1946), plate 143.

[107] Tillett, op. cit., pp. 171-172.

Both during and after the war the placement of the histories of the non-Russian peoples in a Soviet context was reinforced by the ritual repetition of phrases emphasizing the national friendship that prevailed under Russian tutelage. Even Tolstoy the arch Russian nationalist inserted such phrases. In his discussion of the eternal Russian soldier mentioned above, for example, he states that "[t]he soldier

---

[108] Tillett, op. cit., pp. 55-56 discusses the presentation of these themes in history textbooks created during this period.

[109] Kenez, Cinema & Soviet Society, pp. 202-203. The emphasis on individual heroes as opposed to the people as a whole was a prominent trait of post-1940 culture.

[110] Pankratova, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 29-31, quote p. 29.

Ivan was born of the Russian people who headed all the fraternal peoples of the Soviet Union."[111]

The constant reiteration of the diversity of the Soviet people can be found throughout the culture of the post-1940 period. In part this served to divert attention from a variety of repressions of non-Russian peoples, most notably the deportation of whole nations (such as the Crimean Tatars in 1944-45) which resulted in countless deaths. It was also not reflected in many major institutions, most notably the army, where Russians made up a disproportionately high percentage of the troops and especially the officer corps.[112] Nevertheless, ethnic diversity did prevail in some areas, including the front-line entertainment from which some of the sources of this paper are drawn, and which had a major impact on the lives of the millions of ordinary soldiers and civilians who witnessed them. Both the performers and the subject matter were disproportionately non-Russian and non-Slavic, including Caucasians, Central Asians, and non-Russians from within the RSFSR, most notably a large number of Jews.[113]

---

[111] Tolstoy, 'Russians and Germans,' in The Making of Russia, pp. 45-46.

[112] Susan L. Curran and Dmitry Ponomareff, 'Managing the Ethnic Factor in the Russian and Soviet Armed Forces: A Historical Overview,' in Alexander Alexiev and S. Enders Wimbush, eds., Ethnic Minorities in the Red Army, (Boulder, 1988), pp. 45-51. This was not always disadvantageous to non-Russians. The predominance of Russians in the officer corps of course also meant that it was Russians who were shot in the pre-war purges. For Central Asian troops their exclusion was not necessarily a bad state of affairs either, as they were generally summarily shot by the Germans. Alexiev, 'Soviet Nationalities in German Wartime Strategy, 1941-1945,' in ibid., p. 73.

In the post-war period an increasing amount of source material and histories began to be published on non-Russian peoples.[114] Many of the histories, especially those published in indigenous languages, were about rural and agrarian history.[115] This points to one of the major ways in which non-Slavic peoples were portrayed. In many ways the themes associated with women were also applied to those peoples, both through common imagery and through direct comparison.

The most obvious example is that of the 'small peoples' of the far north. These usually included 26 ethnic groups whose traditional occupations were hunting, trapping, fishing and reindeer herding. They were distinguished from Russians and others who also dwelt in the north by their 'primitive' state, a designation based primarily on their economic practices.[116]

In none of these societies was there a segment that could be construed as a traditional proletariat, leading the soviet government to declare that the women were 'the real and most authentic' proletariat.[117] This designation was associated with the Bolshevik view of them as noble, classless savages, good in their own way, but, as Slezkine puts it, "[t]hey represented the past, and in order for the future to become present, the past had to go."[118] The effort to bring them into the Soviet age included a broad programme of economic, social and cultural 'improvement,' highlighted by an emphasis on women and children as the hope for the future.[119] Finally in 1938 the northern peoples were declared Soviet and the discipline of ethnography was disbanded, branded a bourgeois pseudo-science.[120]

---

[113] Stites, 'Frontline Entertainment,' in Stites, ed., Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia, pp. 128-129.

[114] Mazour, op. cit., p. 41.

[115] Ibid., pp. 126-130.

[116] Yuri Slezkine, Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North, (Ithaca, 1994), pp. 1-7.

The association of backwardness, nature and women is here in its most extreme form, but similar images were used for other areas as well. The theme of women's liberation from pre-revolutionary patriarchal oppression was common throughout society, but was especially emphasized in and with reference to non-Slavic areas.[121] The typical peasant Stakhanovite was a woman, but they were also disproportionately represented by colourful ethnic minorities. "At the national level, one of the celebrities main functions was to allow Stalin to play the

---

[117] Yuri Slezkine, 'From Savages to Citizens: The Cultural Revolution in the Soviet Far North, 1928-1938,' in Slavic Review, 51:1 (1992), p. 66.

[118] Ibid., pp. 56-57, quote p. 57.

[119] Ibid., 59-75.

[120] Ibid., p. 76.

[121] Fitzpatrick, Stalin's Peasants, pp. 277-279.

wise and caring leader-father with his affectionate peasant daughters."[122] This brings together many of the themes discussed above, with the 'backward' peoples and segments of the population (especially women and non-Slavs) being led into the Soviet paradise by Stalin and the Russians, with whom they have a familial relationship. The trend came to fruition in the post-war period when all elements of Soviet society were portrayed as living and having lived in perpetual friendship.

History as Decoration

The notion of backwardness common to most industrializing and modernizing societies came to be represented in the Soviet Union as a reflection of both the past and the timeless spirit of the nation. In the historical culture of the period those 'backward' nations were, as we have seen, irrevocably subordinated to Russia. This was also the case within nations, including Russia. The backward elements of society, primarily women and agricultural workers, were seen as being part of an unchanging, traditional past, at least insofar as they had not yet been proletarianized. Even the history of Ukraine was seen as less progressive than that of Russia, and could thus be placed in a dependent relationship with it.

---

[122] Ibid., p. 273.

While the notion of backwardness served to cement Russia's place at the centre of the Soviet world it was also given a positive spin (from the non-Russian perspective). Nowhere was this more evident than in the broad diffusion of folklore and folkloric techniques and images throughout the culture of the period. Folklore was seen as an expression of the true national spirit, one that endured through, and in a sense outside, time.

The 1920's were a major period in folklore research, although its practice was condemned by the government as bourgeois and/or kulak. The *byliny* (Russian epic songs), for example, were declared to have been aristocratic in origin, and thus totally unreflective of the life of the people.[123] In general the attitude taken by the Bolsheviks was that this was a form of life that, along with the backward peoples who practiced it, would soon disappear. The only value to folkloristics was that it would preserve traces of that life. This changed in 1934 when Gorkii gave a speech in which he described folklore as a reflection of real life, calling for it to be encouraged, although in a form which purged it of mythico-religious, bourgeois and kulak elements.[124]

---

[123] Felix Oinas, 'The Aristocratic Origin of Russian Byliny,' in Oinas, Essays in Russian Folklore and Mythology, pp. 32-34.

[124] Oinas, 'The Political Uses and Themes of Folklore in the Soviet Union,' in Oinas, ed., Folklore, Nationalism, and Politics, (Columbus, 1978), pp. 77-78; Frank Miller, Folklore for Stalin, (Armonk, 1990), pp. 6-8.

There was an immediate response to Gorkii's speech, with the study and collection of folklore spreading throughout the Soviet Union. It was no longer simply a case of collecting and cataloguing, however. Folklorists screened the subject matter they collected, synthesized and Sovietized it, and then advised folklore performers on how to create an ideologically acceptable folklore.[125] This involved both the alteration of material, as well as the reacceptance of traditions such as the *byliny*.[126] The assumptions on which this new folklore was based were clearly indicated by the designation given to ideologically incorrect creations: 'non-national' (*nenarodnyi*).[127] Its purpose was equally clearly stated by one of the leading folklorists of the time, Yurii Sokolov:

> Never, in all the history of Russia, has the oral poetic word served the social aims so broadly and powerfully as in the Soviet period. Soviet folkloristics has helped to reveal the agitational and propagnadist significance of folklore. And thereby, Soviet folkloristics has firmly allied itself with the practical tasks of our social life.[128]

---

[125] Oinas, 'The Political Uses and Themes of Folklore in the Soviet Union,' pp. 79-83. The collection of the folklore followed a familiar pattern, beginning in the Moscow oblast and gradually expanding in concentric circles outward until it had encompassed the entire Union.

[126] Oinas, 'The Aristocratic Origin of Russian Byliny,' pp. 32-34.

[127] Oinas, 'The Problem of the Notion of Soviet Folklore,' in Oinas, Essays on Russian Folklore and Mythology, pp. 166-167.

[128] Y. M. Sokolov, Russian Folklore, (New York, 1950), p. 141.

One of the major points of contention in the study of Soviet folklore lies in determining the extent to which it was *really* folklore. Frank Miller contends that the personalized and centralized nature of folklore renders it false, especially insofar as it was equated with written literature.[129] However, this assumes the very grounds that the Soviet folklore was attempting to create, namely the notion that there is an eternal national spirit that is somehow spontaneously evident in the cultural productions of the people. This is emphasized by Regine Robin, who focusses on the syncretic nature of the new Soviet folklore. Individual, professional performers became the bearers of the new folklore, but there was more to it than simply central control. In an analogous way to literature, folklore adopted and adapted a host of themes and techniques from both past and present to create a uniquely stalinist cultural form.[130]

Sokolov gives a somewhat similar interpretation. He emphasizes the class basis of folklore, differentiating between 'true' folklore of the masses and 'false' folklore of the upper classes. Nevertheless, he does not contend that folklore was impersonal and unchanging. This, he states, would belittle folk culture. Rather, he sees its value in the diversity of themes it addresses, as well as in its incorporation of literature, dance, music, mime, theatre and a host of other traditions, in addition to contemporary themes.[131]

---

[129] Miller, op. cit., pp. 19-20.

[130] Regine Robin, 'Stalinism and Popular Culture,' in Gunther, ed., The Culture of the Stalin Period, pp. 23-32. She probably overemphasizes the popularity of the new folklore as she bases her assumptions on the notion of a 'naive monarchism' existing among the peasants, which Fitzpatrick has shown to have been largely non-existent. Fitzpatrick, Stalin's Peasants, pp. 286-312.

The debate over how to define Soviet folklore is important as it speaks to the Soviet conceptions of nationality and ethnicity. It was considered to be something that was vital to the life of a backward nation, but as those societies advanced into the Soviet age folklore became something more superficial. Performers and performances could be taken out of their context, sovietized, and be put on anywhere in the Union. The core of folklore was Soviet, understood as the life of the masses which (of course) reflected the dominant values of Soviet society. The various 'ethnic' attributes became decorative additions to that Soviet core. They were no longer central to its meaning.

The high point of Soviet folklore came in the 1937-1945 period. Folkloric themes appeared in a wide variety of media, and individual performers became well-known throughout the Union.[132] Russian folklore played a large role in this, but non-Russian peoples were also strongly represented. The exception to this was the Ukrainians whose folklore and folkloristics were subordinated almost entirely under the pan-slavic umbrella.[133] Non-slavic peoples were given a much greater autonomy in both the study and performance of folklore.[134] As we have seen, ethnic minorities played a prominent role in the peasant Stakhanovite movement, often with a great emphasis on colourful national folk dress and customs. The ethnic diversity of frontline entertainment likewise focussed on traditional forms and themes in performance.

---

[131] Sokolov, op. cit., pp. 4-11.

[132] Miller, op. cit., pp. 10-12.

The spread of folkloric traditions throughout the Soviet Union was also accompanied by a reverse process in which stalinist themes took on folkloric elements. Contemporary songs, for example, were folklorized in the sense that, especially during the war, they were sung by all segments of society, and developed a host of thematic variations, both regionally based and between performers.[135] Under Stalin many of the images that had dominated in the 1920's and early 1930's took on powerful folkloric connotations. The dominant conception of the individual shifted from man-as-machine to that of the hero-*bogatyr*.[136] Technology was subordinated to humans, as in the aviators who became 'Stalin's falcons' (the bird was a powerful traditional image), *using* technology to accomplish their heroic deeds.[137] The most common use of folkloric themes and images was in portrayals of Stalin and Lenin.[138]

---

[133] Robert Klymasz, 'Folklore Politics in the Soviet Ukraine: Perspectives on Some Recent Trends and Developments,' in Oinas, ed., Folklore, Nationalism, and Politics, pp. 98-101.

[134] Robert Austerlitz, 'Folklore, Nationality and the Twentieth Century in Siberia and the Soviet Far East,' in ibid., pp. 140-141.

[135] Richard Rothstein, 'Homeland, Home Town, and Battlefield: The Popular Song,' pp. 82-84.

Stalinist folklore thus served as a significant medium through which the various national cultures that made up the Soviet Union could be integrated. It served a decorative function in the sense that it was superimposed on a fundamentally Soviet base. As such it was both conservative and nationalist, but nationalist in the sense of being simultaneously ethnic and multi-ethnic (Soviet).[139] The government "promoted folklorism in all the national republics and regions as a binding force to the center, a signifier of loyalty, and a commitment to ethnic equality."[140]

---

[136] Toby Clark, op. cit., pp. 35-39, 44-48; Katerina Clark, The Soviet Novel, pp. 73-74, 138-141.

[137] Bailes, op. cit., pp. 386-388; Margaret Ziolkowski, 'The Reversal of Stalinist Literary Motifs: The Image of the Wounded Bird in Recent Russian Literature,' in Modern Language Review, 83 (1988), pp. 106-110.

[138] Many of these portrayals drew heavily on a secularized religious tradition, much of which was Orthodox, but which also had a much broader resonance. See Jorn Guldberg, 'Socialist Realism as Institutional Practice: Observations on the Interpretation of the Works of Art of the Stalin Period,' Gunther, ed., op. cit., pp. 173-174.

[139] Stites, Russian Popular Culture, pp. 71-72, 78-79.

[140] Ibid., p. 95.

The post-war period saw a purging of folkloristics, largely on the grounds that, due to its use of foreign sources and foreign forms of folklore, it was a manifestation of 'rootless cosmopolitanism.'[141] This was a continuation of the pre-war process in which ethnography was dismissed as a pseudo-science, and the 'small peoples' of the north declared to be Soviet. Ethnicity was stripped of any autonomy, becoming entirely Soviet. After the war folklore was frozen into a set of images, themes and practices that could be ritually invoked in a variety of settings. Like society as a whole it was monumentalized.

The process through which ethnicity became a decorative adjunct to Soviet identity can be seen most clearly through a look at a number of exhibitions. The first major exhibition of the Soviet period was the 1923 Agricultural and Cottage Industries Exhibition in Moscow. It was arranged in the same way as most world fairs, with the layout of the grounds centring on the exhibits of the most 'advanced' nations, with the 'primitive' and 'exotic' nationalities of the Caucasus, Central Asia and other far-away regions being located in a separate section. This served to emphasize their peripheral position in relation to the European parts of the Union, a position that was further emphasized by the portrayal of those peoples as static and timeless beside the dynamic Slavs.[142]

---

[141] Oinas, 'Folklore Activities and Scholarship in Russia,' pp. 150-152.

The next major exhibition was the 1937 World Fair in Paris, the same fair at which Mukhina's sculpture of the worker and collective farm girl was first displayed (fig. 1). Here the focus was on Soviet themes, most notably Stalin, although a number of specific cultures were also on display.[143] This represented a change in emphasis, with the Soviet nation taking precedence over the individual nationalities. The 1939 All-Union Agricultural Exhibition (VSKhV) in Moscow marked the next stage in this process. It placed more emphasis on individual nationalities, but they were thoroughly Sovietized. The exhibition was planned as a model of and for the country. The square of nations featured pavilions from all of the national republican peoples as well as a few others, but the architecture was classically-based with 'national' ornamentation.[144] The historical understanding on which the exhibition was based was thoroughly Soviet. "[T]he VSKhV depicted exotic national cultures converging at full speed upon a predetermined communist destiny."[145] The height of each pavilion matched the importance given to the particular national group in the stalinist universe.[146] They were portrayed in relation to the Russian norm, but were no longer (as in 1923) *qualitatively* different.

---

[142] Greg Castillo, 'Peoples at an Exhibition: Soviet Architecture and the National Question,' in South Atlantic Quarterly, 94:3 (1995), pp. 719-720.

[143] Sarah Wilson, 'The Soviet Pavillion in Paris,' in Art of the Soviets, pp. 112-113.

[144] Tarkhanov and Kavtaradze, op. cit., pp. 76-79. This is not to say that the architecture is simplistic (although it may be that as well). A number of the pavilions, especially the Uzbek, were extremely complex in their design and significations.

The final exhibition was based on VSKhV, but expanded the focus beyond architecture to become the All-Union Exhibition of the People's Economy (VDNKh), with Mukhina's statue gracing the entrance. Not completed until the year after Stalin's death, it represents the apotheosis of the development of national architecture during the period. VDNKh presents a frozen picture of the Soviet Union in the post-war period. The architecture is unmistakably stalinist, employing a variety of classical styles put together almost at random and covered in an incredible array of 'national' paintings, mosaics, friezes, statues and bas reliefs. Now that the people had been declared Soviet, ethnicity had lost its differentiating ability, leaving it with a solely decorative function.

---

[145] Castillo, op. cit., p. 732.

[146] Tarkhanov and Kavtoradze, op. cit., p. 165. This section is also based on several visits to VDNKh in 1993-94. Externally it has remained largely the same, although some airplanes and rockets were added in commemoration of later Soviet achievements. However, the buildings have now been taken over by the 'imperialist forces,' with everything from cars to shoes on sale, including a 'Canadian' pavilion selling RCMP dolls and hockey jerseys.

Sovietization of History

This chapter has discussed the stalinist conception of history from a number of different angles. The contention is that the historical culture was fundamentally sovietized, with the peoples of the Union taking part in the Soviet identity that emerged from this historical projection in a variety of ways. The fact that Russia was at the centre of this historical culture was not *simply* a reflection of Russian dominance, although it may have been that as well. Rather, the culture was organized according to an internal logic that consistently circled around a mythical Russia much as it did around a mythical Stalin.

This can be clearly seen in Stalin's famous toast to the Russian people given at the end of the war. His speech is generally interpreted as a signal of Russian ascendancy. In part this is the case, but such an interpretation tends to miss the significance. The loosening of restrictions on society as a whole during the war, including the various nationalisms, Russian in particular, led to a situation where government leaders had to try and contain that Russian nationalism, to strip it of any potentially subversive elements. They essentially had two options. The first was to try to return to the pre-war situation and stamp out that nationalism, the second to coopt it. Stalin chose the latter.

The policy that was to be followed was introduced by Stalin in his salute. He proposed "a toast to the health of our Soviet people [*narod*] and, above all others, the Russian people [*narod*]."[147] He referred to them as "the most outstanding" and "the leading force" among the nations of the Union, giving them credit for having won the war.[148] Finally he saluted "the faith of the Russian people in the Soviet government [which] proved to be the deciding force which ensured the historic victory over the enemy of humanity--over fascism!"[149]

The conception of Russia evident here is not of an independent nation, but of an entity that is fundamentally Soviet. The Russians' outstanding characteristic (which was reiterated four times in his very short speech) is their confidence in the Soviet government. Their position as the 'leading force' is due to the fact that their interests coincide completely with those of the Soviet Union. This identity is cemented by his reference to both as a 'people'

---

[147] Stalin, 'Vystuplenie na prieme v kremle v chest komanduiushchikh voiskami krasnoi armii,' [May 24, 1945] in Sochineniia, vol. 2, p. 203. The term *narod* is generally translated as 'people,' but it has ethnic, linguistic, and spiritual connotations that are not captured by the English term (the German 'volk' is a close equivalent). Stalin's use of *narod* in relation to both Soviet and Russian groups thus seems somewhat contradictory, but it indicates the extent to which Soviet identity had become nationalized, equated with an ethnic nationality like Russian, which in turn had been stripped of much of its 'ethnicity.'

[148] Ibid., 203-204.

[149] Ibid., p. 204.

(*narod*).

The historical culture of the stalinist period as a whole, and the post-war period in particular, reflected this position of Russia in the Union. The dominance of Russia in that culture did not so much Russify Soviet history as it defanged Russian history. As long as Russian history was identical with Soviet history it could not have any subversive value. The treatment of other histories served to reinforce this. Non-Russian histories were seen as positive only insofar as they reflected an historical 'friendship of nations' with Russia at the centre. They contained Russian history, ensuring that it was and remained Soviet. Any other elements were (often violently) anathemized as they (unlike Russian history) had potentially destabilizing consequences. Ultimately we can say with Stephen Velychenko that the post-war histories of the non-Russian peoples were inscribed in "a Russocentric statist framework while denying the Russians a separate history of the RSFSR."[150]

In stalinist historical culture Russia is of primary importance, but in a sense it is a stand-in for the real centre of history. In his discussion of Socialist Realist art Boris Groys gives a description of the relationship of that aesthetic to history. He states that all historical epochs "were regarded as no more than preparatory stages on the road towards the contemporary Soviet age and never as independent models or exemplars."[151] This implied that the history of previous ages (and of 'backward' Soviet cultures, which is the same thing) were not regarded as periods or cultures that had to be understood on their own terms.

---

[150] Velychenko, op. cit., p. 325. Szporluk, 'History and Russian Ethnocentrism,' pp. 46-49 puts forward a similar view.

> In accordance with the Leninist theory of two cultures in one culture, each historical period was regarded as a battleground between progressive and reactionary forces, in which the progressive forces were ultimately aimed at the victory of Socialism in the USSR (even if the clash took place in the remote past), while the reactionary forces were striving to block this. Such an understanding of history naturally led to quotation from the past of everything progressive and rejection of everything reactionary...Ideas of the progressive or reactionary quality of a given phenomenon have naturally changed with time and what is or is not subject to quotation has changed correspondingly.[152]

This description points to the real centre of stalinist history. If, as I have contended, Russia was fundamentally Soviet, then it remained subordinate or secondary to the pivotal event is Soviet history, the Revolution. Russia represents the most progressive entity in stalinist history, but in a sense it is no more than a vehicle for the history that leads to 1917. It is the history of, and surrounding, the Revolution that is the locus around which stalinist historical culture revolves, and it is to this event that we will now turn our attention.

---

[151] Groys, 'The Birth of Socialist Realism from the Spirit of the Russian Avant-Garde,' pp. 144.

[152] _Ibid_., pp. 144-145.

Chapter 4

SCENES FROM THE REVOLUTION

Throughout this paper a number of different metaphors have been used to describe stalinist history. The feature common to most of them is their circularity. The contention has been that stalinist history circles around a central point, that it is conceived around, and focuses in on, a singular event, and by extension a singular individual. Those are, of course, the Revolution and Stalin.

Chapter one discussed the extent to which the official history of the Party was written around the figure of Stalin. In this chapter the consideration will be on the broader historical culture of the period. Under Stalin the Revolution was not portrayed as frequently as it may seem, but the portrayals that were created were prominent, tightly controlled, and linked to numerous other historical events and figures. In the historical narrative constructed in stalinist culture all events, past, present or future, were conceived in terms of the Revolution and its maker Stalin.

The most notable feature of the Revolution was that it was seen as qualitatively different from anything else in history. In his comments on Emelian Iaroslavskii, the principal author of the Short Course, George Enteen contends that he portrayed the Revolution "as a moment of such extraordinary significance as to be outside the normal flow of time. All previous history is construed as its context."[1] Katerina Clark describes a similar feature in the Socialist Realist novel which depicted two orders of being, time and place. Through Stalin one can reach a higher order of being, one that is essentially beyond or above time. This corresponds to an exalted notion of space in which the boundaries surrounding various areas of the world and the Soviet Union divide the profane from the sacred.[2]

The notion of time in stalinist history is similar to Benjamin's conception of Messianic time. He describes a present that "comprises the entire history of mankind in an enormous abridgement."[3] In the Soviet case it was not the present that contained the past, but the Revolution. It contained past, present and future within itself, with every event or person given importance and legitimacy only in relation to it. Benjamin's Messianic time can imply dynamism and change, but the fact that the Revolution was already past tended to ossify, to promote stasis. Ritual descriptions of the rosy communist future were common, but that future was always already present in the Revolution, which as a result did not provide any impetus for an active challenge to the present order.

---

[1] Enteen, 'Writing Party History in the USSR,' p. 329.

[2] Clark, The Soviet Novel, pp. 145-146. See also the discussion of the frontier in chapter 3, especially Paperny's description of the hierarchy of space and Groys, The Total Art of Stalinism, pp. 48-49.

[3] Walter Benjamin, Illuminations, p. 263.

Past and future shared a common bond in stalinist society. They were both necessary adjuncts to the Revolution which in turn contained them. It was an event outside of time and space, a condition that applied to anything or anyone associated with it. In this sense it can be called mythical, as it was the medium through which all social relationships were contructed. The fact that explicitly it was not constantly front and centre does not diminish its power. It was part of the subtext of all aspects of society, and through it that society was simultaneously legitimized and given a destiny.

The saturation of society by the myth of the Revolution and its maker (Stalin) makes any systematic attempt to study it somewhat futile. It can be subsumed under the designation 'totalitarian' or 'cult of personality,' but that tends to obscure the complexity and depth of the myth. It's pervasiveness makes any attempt at a systematic explanation of the myth impossible. Instead, a relatively in depth if somewhat impressionistic look at a few aspects of the myth can serve to give some insight into the ways in which it functioned and the ways in which it related to conceptions of Soviet identity.

The Classes

In Marxist thought revolutions occur when the antagonism between two classes, one representing reaction, the other progress, brings the progressive class into full consciousness of its position in society and leads it to overthrow the power of the oppressing class. The final resolution of the class struggle comes when the contradictions inherent in capitalism lead the proletariat into a consciousness of their oppressed condition which then mobilizes them to throw off the yoke of the bourgeoisie.

In the stalinist mythology of the Revolution this was what had occurred in 1917. Of course, as has been discussed on a number of occasions, this mythology was founded on a fundamental reconceptualization of Marxist thought. Nevertheless, class, and especially a heroic proletariat, played a significant role in portrayals of the history of the Revolution. The pre-Revolutionary debates over the role of the vanguard and the relative importance of spontaneity and consciousness that had so divided the various Marxists prior to the Revolution were resolved in stalinist historical culture. The revolutionary proletariat of the past merged with and supported the image of the contented, prosperous and happily subservient proletariat that was alleged to exist in the present, and the fully communist proletariat of the future.

One of the most powerful and multi-faceted examples of the portrayal of the historical role of the proletariat comes in Boris Ioganson's 1937 painting 'At an Old Urals Works' (fig. 5). He was one of the most important artists of the Stalin period, creating a number of widely known works, including the above.[4] 'At an Old Urals Works' led to Ioganson's first of two Stalin Prizes, this one in 1941, the inaugural year of the award.

The picture shows a cramped, dark and oppressive factory in pre-revolutionary Russia. The owner of the factory, a stereotypically obese and ostentatiously dressed capitalist, is juxtaposed with a worker seated nearby. There appears to be a confrontation of sorts, with the worker glaring at the owner with undisguised hatred, while he in turn looks back, confident in his position, but with a vague disquiet brought on by this brazen proletarian. A lackey stands behind his master, sneering at the gall of the worker, while the working masses look on.

The stereotypical figures were all widely used in stalinist culture, and would have conjured up a host of images. The image of the capitalist was used to describe pre-revolutionary oppressors, greedy Nepmen, and was later

---

[4] Most notable among these is 1933's 'The Interrogation of Communists' and 1950's 'Lenin's Speech to the Third Congress of the Komsomol,' which was painted by a brigade of artists under his direction. See Groys, The Total Art of Stalinism, pp. 53-56 for a discussion of Ioganson's conceptions of socialist realism and his role as an artist.

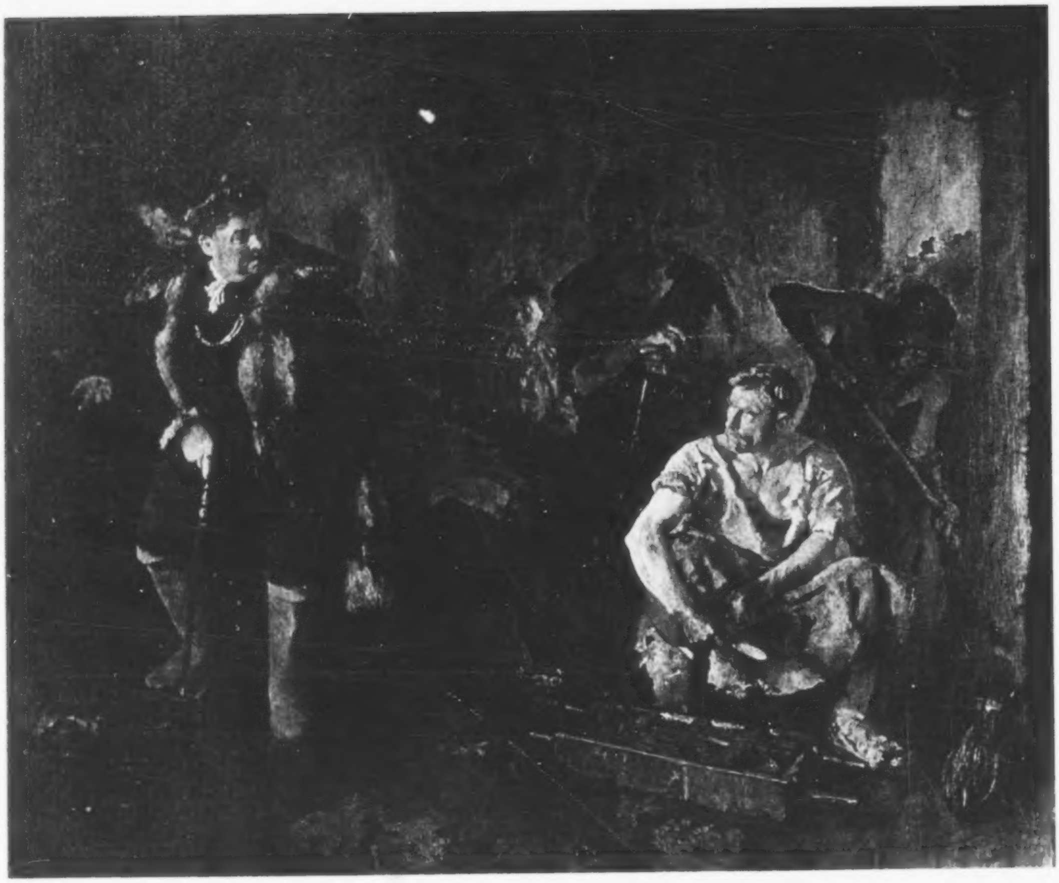

Figure 5
Boris Ioganson
At an Old Urals Works
1937
(From The Tretyakov Gallery, plate 125)

transformed to depict evil Nazis.[5] The lackeys correspond to all of the insidious enemies of the Soviet Union, especially those hidden wreckers and saboteurs that were in the process of being uncovered during the Purges. The hunched and hunted worker in the background was a typical representative of the oppressed masses who were freed by the Revolution.

The cultural context of this confrontation brings out its significance in full force. The most noticable element in the painting is the use of light. The background figures are shrouded in darkness and gloom, still held in their oppression by ignorance and fear of the overlord, waiting only for leadership and knowledge to spring into revolutionary action. The central person in the work is the bright figure of the proletarian becoming aware of both his oppression and the source of it.

Light was a powerful and common metaphor in stalinist society, based in a long tradition in pre- and post-revolutionary mythology. The most notable was in religious imagery. In the Christian tradition (Orthodox and others), as well as in non-Christian religions that had existed on Soviet territory, light was commonly used to signify holiness and an exalted state. This was also the case in secular traditions of tsardom and of folklore, with light signifying wisdom, power and authority. This tradition was coopted by the Bolsheviks after the Revolution through a series of symbolic reversals in which they took over the power of the religious light. One of the most powerful and direct ways was in the literal bringing of light to the people. In the early 1920's electrification was commonly referred to as the 'lampochka Il'icha,' or Lenin's lamp.[6] This signified both the technological progress brought by the Bolsheviks, but also the ending of ignorance and obscuritanism and the dawning of a new age of freedom and enlightenment for all.

---

[5] See Argyrios Pisiotis, 'Images of Hate in the Art of War,' in Stites, ed., Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia, pp. 141-156. The NEP was the period between the end of the Civil War and the onset of the Cultural Revolution during which social control was relaxed and parts of the economy were permitted to function in a market fashion. Those who became wealthy from this economic policy were known as 'Nepmen,' and became a favoured target during the post-1927 period.

The significance of light changed again under Stalin. It lost much of the vanguardist and dynamic quality it had picked up under Lenin, returning to the more conservative and hierarchical implications that had prevailed in the religious imagery. Particularly in folklore 'Stalin-light' was a figure who recurred frequently, often in a similar fashion or related to Stalin the father and Stalin the *bogatyr*. In these portrayals he imparted some of the light to the people, but was primarily the object of adoration.[7]

---

[6] Katerina Clark, 'The City versus the Countryside in Soviet Peasant Literature of the Twenties: A Duel of Utopias,' in Gleason, et al, eds., Bolshevik Culture, p. 185.

[7] Nigel Moore, 'The Myth of Stalin: The Psychodynamics of its Utopian Ideals,' in Russian History/Histoire Russe, 11:2-3 (1984), pp. 293-297 discusses a number of aspects of light and solar imagery in relation to Stalin.

These conceptions of light are evident in the painting. The worker is an object of admiration, an iconic figure who represents the early stages of the Revolution as well as the development of a Soviet industry that, unlike that of the capitalists, could allow him to fulfill his desire to be free. His image resonates with those of the Stakhanovites whose cult was at its height during the period in which the painting was composed. Like them, the image of the worker is inscribed in a conservative framework.

The hierarchical implications of the light imagery (i.e., the reference to Stalin as the source of light) is cemented by a third key figure in the painting, namely the boy who stands in the background. Unlike the dark reds and browns used for the oppressed workers, the boy is painted in similar colours to the worker in the foreground. He symbolizes the oppressive child-labour encouraged by the capitalists, but more importantly the next generation of labourers that would usher in the Soviet age. The worker is placed in the position of mentor which, as we have seen, was a common way through which social relations were conceptualized in stalinist culture, a conception that consistently emphasized the place of Stalin as the ultimate mentor. The ghostly presence of Stalin would have been clear to contemporary viewers.

The boy also serves to indicate the inexorable movement of historical forces. The capitalist is fully aware of the antagonism of the worker, but the boy is entirely outside his field of vision. He not only symbolizes the coming Revolution, but also demonstrates its inevitability. Once the workers become conscious of their oppression the capitalists will not be able to monitor all of them. Finally, the boy is a stand-in for the viewer of the work. A common technique in socialist realist painting was to place a spectator in the work, while the viewer was "supposed to react according to his 'double's' reaction in the picture."[8] The viewer in this case can thus both admire and learn from the worker in the foreground and from the scene as a whole.

'At an Old Urals Works' is a typical example of presentations of the historical role of the working class in stalinist culture. It is historical in another sense as well. Socialist Realist painting was based on a number of influences, but none was more important than the *peredvizhniki* (wanderers) of the late 19th century. Under Stalin they were claimed as the precursors of Soviet art, combining a realistic style, easily accessible to the masses, with a powerful social(ist) message.

The leading light of the *peredvizhniki* was Ilya Repin, a somewhat ambiguous figure as a revolutionary, but extremely influential in stalinist painting. He had been claimed by both official society and radical movements as their own, especially the Populists. They saw him as creating a true reflection of the soul of the Russian *narod*, but one that simultaneously could inspire them in revolutionary goals.[9]

---

[8] Holz, op. cit., p. 77. This was one of the elements of the 'dream theatre' discussed in chapter 2.

One of Repin's most famous works was the dynamic 'Volga Barge Haulers' (fig. 6). In spite of having been commissioned by the Grand Duke Vladimir, it became one of the major populist icons.[10] It contained many of the themes present in Ioganson's painting, serving as an inspiration for that later work. Again we have a picture of the oppression of the masses, with a row of dark, downtrodden men pulling a boat for their masters, who in this case are only implicitly present. The central figure is similar to the worker in 'At an Old Urals Works.' He is painted in much lighter colours than the other men, and is standing straight and looking up and out of the painting. Unlike the other men he is young, representing the future much as the boy in Ioganson's work.

Repin's painting was adopted by the populists for its clear implications of the dawning of a revolutionary consciousness in the masses. It augured change, providing a hopeful vision of a future in which the people could gain freedom. The line of workers is ruptured by the figure of the boy, creating a rift or break in the otherwise unbroken oppression. That rupture is actively created by the boy as he stands straight and appears to be in the process of pulling

---

[9] James Billington, The Icon and the Axe, (New York, 1970), pp. 402-433.

[10] Ibid., p. 406.

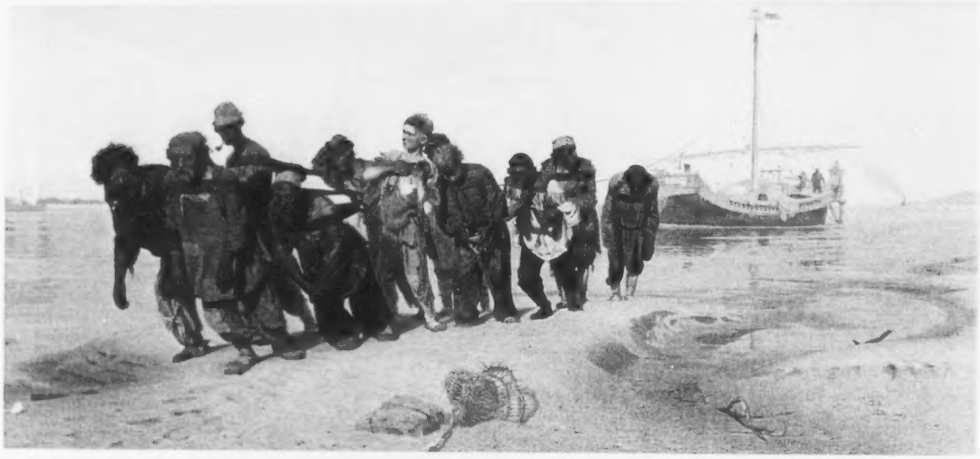

Figure 6
Ilya Repin
Volga Barge Haulers
1873
(From Elizabeth Valkenier, Ilya Repin and the World of Russian Art, plate 1)

off the strap that binds him.

While the similarities between the two paintings are clear, the cultural context in which they were created gave them very different meanings. 'Volga Barge Haulers' was a call to arms, a subversive work that pointed to the future. "To the young students who saw this picture, its meaning was clear: the boy was raising his head up in a first, subconscious act of defiance and was looking inarticulately to *them*, the student generation of Russia, to come and lead the suffering people to deliverance.[11] The same cannot be said for 'At an Old Urals Works.' As was discussed above, it was a deeply conservative work, one that supported the existing social order at a number of different levels.

The event around which the stalinist interpretation of both works turns is the Revolution. The dynamic, revolutionary quality of the worker in Ioganson's painting points to change that has already occurred. His dynamism is domesticated by the fact that contemporary society is precisely what he is striving to bring into being. He is thus both a heroic ancestor and legitimizing figure. The revolutionary qualities of Repin's work were similarly re-conceived in the light of the Revolution. The subversive qualities that were so evident to his contemporaries lost all of their potency in the stalinist cultural setting. He, like the *peredvizhniki* in general, could be appropriated as predecessors, and their works could give the Socialist Realist aesthetic deep historical roots. The historical portrait of 'At an Old Urals Works' functions at both the literal level, giving stalinist society historical predecessors, and at a cultural level, giving stalinist art an historical pedigree.

---

[11] Ibid., p. 406.

The centrality of the Revolution in this interpretation also allows Repin's painting to be sovietized. The populists saw the painting in terms of Russia, of a Russian people and soul that needed to be liberated. Socialist Realist painting attempted to go beyond such notions, even while it was firmly rooted in a number of Russian traditions. It "was an aspect of the search for a cultural and political identity in which the [Soviet] nation collectively could believe."[12]

A major element in that new identity was the myth of the proletariat, in which, as Berdiaev describes it, "the myth of the Russian people arose in a new form. There took place, as it were, an identification of the Russian people with the proletariat, and of Russian messianism with proletarian messianism."[13] However I would argue that while the new identity was based primarily on Russian traditions, it was thoroughly sovietized. Similar portrayals of the struggles of the proletariat of non-Russian nations formed an important if subordinate component of stalinist historical culture. The

---

[12] Holz, op. cit., p. 74.

[13] Nicolas Berdyaev, The Origin of Russian Communism, (London, 1937), p. 107.

Revolution was the founding myth through which that identity was created.

The two works discussed above provide an excellent example of the role of the proletariat in Soviet mythology. They also demonstrate some of the ways in which both pre-revolutionary history and pre-revolutionary artists could be brought into Soviet history. In the process the meanings of those histories and artists were reconfigured, imbuing them with a powerfully Soviet set of meanings, and enlisting them in support of the existing social order.

The Revolutionaries

The role of the proletariat in the revolution tended to be presented as a sort of background legitimization of the Revolution, but the workers were rarely granted a more active role. In a painting like 'At an Old Urals Works' the rise of proletarian revolutionary consciousness is presented in classical Marxist fashion, but the Revolution itself was not depicted as *the workers'* creation. In other words, they did not make the Revolution in order to free themselves; rather, the Revolution was made for them in order to bring them freedom. In stalinist historical culture the leaders of the Revolution were therefore the most prominent heroes.

The glorification of revolutionaries extended far beyond the events of 1917. A host of pre-revolutionary figures were presented as proto-Bolsheviks who had helped to further the cause of revolution. They can be divided into two groups: the peasant and the professional revolutionaries. The peasant revolutionaries such as Ivan Bolotnikov, Emelian Pugachev and Stenka Razin had formed largely peasant armies and attempted to overthrow or replace the Tsar. They had been widely celebrated in the early 1920's, with Lenin in particular taking care to promote their legacies.[14]

Under Stalin their actions continued to be glorified, however their anarchic and anti-authoritarian tendencies were played down. They were portrayed rather as leaders fighting the *illegitimate* aspects of state authority. In films on Razin and Pugachev the heroes even analyze society and its ill in class terms.[15] The emphasis was always placed on the multi-national character of their armies, presaging the later support offered by non-Russians for the Revolution in 1917.[16] Non-Russian movements were also glorified to an extent as well, although within much stricter limits. Shamil, for example, the leader of the most successful of the Caucasian movements against the Russian Empire, was given a prominent place in Soviet culture. However, during and especially after the war, when the government was attempting to quell nationalism in the Caucasus, he no longer appeared, finally being anathemized in 1950.[17]

---

[14] Christina Lodder, 'Lenin's Plan for Monumental Propaganda,' in Cullerne Bown and Taylor, eds., Art of the Soviets, pp. 19-21.

[15] Kenez, Cinema and Soviet Society, pp. 161.

[16] See for example Pankratova, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 185-187, 227-235, vol. 2, pp. 70-74.

The peasant insurrectionaries were glorified as examples of the spontaneous power of the people, but that power was always strictly contained and channelled by the conscious revolutionaries. The dynamic that resulted from this interaction is most famously present in the novel Chapaev. Although it was published in 1923, it remained a key work in the Stalin era, and was one of the handful of works that served as models in the development of Socialist Realism. As a novel, however, it was also one of the touchstones of popular culture, remaining *the* most popular novel of the entire Soviet era, with the film version, released in 1934, likewise being the most popular in its medium.[18]

Chapaev was a civil war hero made famous by the author, Dmitrii Furmanov, who had also been his commissar. The novel is a fictionalized version of his exploits during the war, but focuses especially on the developing relationship between the hot-headed, anarchic Chapaev and his methodical and historically aware commissar Klichkov (Furmanov). It is a classic Socialist Realist tale in which the conscious Party (always equated with Stalin), armed with the correct knowledge of the laws of history, guides the spontaneous power of the people towards the proper ends.

---

[17] Tillett, op. cit., pp. 130-147. See Pankratova, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 166-169 for a positive Soviet view. Chapter 3 discusses the portrayal of non-Russian and anti-Russian movements.

[18] Stites, Russian Popular Culture, p. 86; Kenez, op. cit., p. 172. In the first five years after its release at least 50 million tickets were sold.

Throughout the novel the names of the pre-revolutionary peasant revolutionaries are invoked. Villages and regiments are named after them, while Klichkov thinks of Chapaev as "a hero from the camp of the freemen, like Yemelyan Pugachov [sic], Stepan Razin and Yermak."[19] As a representative of the people Chapaev is an inspiration, a leader in the emotional rather than the intellectual sense. While he occasionally goes too far, especially in his hatred of all authority, he gradually comes to see the wisdom of Klichkov and the need to bow to his superior knowledge. The power of the people is thereby transformed from a potentially subversive and unpredictable force into an obedient if still powerful servant of the Party.

The 'people' in the novel are portrayed in a similar fashion to those who supported the earlier revolutionaries. They are predominantly Russian in ethnicity, but are placed firmly in a multi-national Soviet context. They are consistently portrayed as defending the Revolution, not

---

[19] Dmitry Furmanov, Chapayev, (Moscow, n.d.), p. 42. For other examples see pp. 60, 160, 166, 280, 287.

Russia, and they are working in conjunction with people of a variety of nationalities.[20] Under the tutelage of the Party the oppressed classes discussed in the previous section are finally gaining their freedom. In fact, paralleling Repin's painting, it is the barge-haulers who are the first people in the town of Pugachev to join the Red Army.[21]

The ending of the novel and the fate of Chapaev in later years ties into many of the aspects of stalinist historical culture discussed earlier. In the desperate last fight with the Cossacks Chapaev is shot in the head, disappearing into the swift waters of the Ural river.[22] The death of the hero is a relatively common occurence in socialist realist novels, but it should not be understood as tragic. Hans Gunther describes the socialist realist novel as a trivialized version of the *bildungsroman*. The hero develops (self-)awareness through "the allegedly rational insight into the leading role of the Party and its knowledge of the 'laws' of history."[23] However, this serves as vindication as well as inspiration for the hero. The fate of the individual is subordinated to the

---

[20] The Moslem Regiment, for example, was comprised of people from 14 different nationalities, primarily Kirghiz, and was "[a]mong the most meritorious and gallant regiments." Ibid., p. 61.

[21] Ibid., p. 36.

[22] Ibid., p. 378.

[23] Hans Gunther, 'Education and Conversion: The Road to the New Man in the Totalitarian *Bildungsroman*,' in Gunther, ed., op. cit., p. 200.

needs of society (represented by the 'laws of history'), meaning that his death loses its tragic significance.[24]
In the death of Chapaev that historical vindication is presented in the final pages of the novel, with his division heroically breaking out of encirclement, and the civil war gradually turning in favour of the Reds. The final line has his soldiers vowing "to fight on to victory, to carry on with the cause of those who with selfless valour had given up their lives along the banks and in the waves of the turbulent Ural."[25] Having fulfilled his historical role through the Party (Klichkov), Chapaev in turn can be used by the Party and nation to inspire others. His life and death could achieve no higher meaning than to become one of the primary examples of the Party's greatness throughout history.[26]

The peasant revolutionary played a major role in stalinist historical culture but, as was the case in Chapaev, that role was always subordinated to the Party and its representatives. Historically this meant that 'professional' revolutionaries, from the Decembrists to Lenin, were the dominant figures in the development of the Revolution. To a greater or lesser extent they were conscious of the laws of historical materialism, and could thus lead the development of society towards socialism.

---

[24] Ibid., pp. 204-208. See also Clark, The Soviet Novel, pp. 178-188; Brown, op. cit., p. 130.

[25] Furmanov, op. cit., p. 384.

[26] See Kukryniksy poster (fig. 3) for another example of Chapaev in Soviet culture.

The Decembrists were the earliest of the Russian revolutionaries, providing an inspiration for all those that followed. While in the 1920's they were generally considered to be liberal and aristocratic, under Stalin those liberal tendencies were purged, primarily by conflating the liberal Northern Society with the more radical Southern Society.[27] Their rehabilitation was completed in 1939 when M. V. Nechkina put forward the concept of 'noble revolutionariness.' This acknowledged the shortcomings of their views and actions, but emphasizing their positive contributions to the development of the revolution in an earlier, less enlightened, age.[28]

Similar approaches were taken to other earlier revolutionaries. Herzen, for example, was criticized for such faults as "liberal vacillation," but in general he was reread as a materialist by Soviet commentators.[29] The greatest of the pre-Bolshevik revolutionaries was Chernyshevskii. He had been one of Lenin's great inspirations, and after much debate during the late 1920's and early 1930's over the relationship of his thought to that of the Bolsheviks he was enshrined as the greatest revolutionary of his time.[30] Finally, other revolutionaries, most notably Bakunin, who during the 1920's had been portrayed in a positive light, were now seen as negative.[31]

---

[27] John Gooding, 'Decembrists in the Soviet Union,' in Soviet Studies, 40:2 (1988), pp. 196-198.

[28] Ibid., p. 198.

[29] G. Teryaev, A.I. Herzen: Great Russian Thinker and Revolutionary Democrat, (Moscow, 1954), quote p. 84. See also Martin Malia, Alexander Herzen and the Birth of Russina Socialism, (New York, 1961), pp. 250-251.

Most of the revolutionaries glorified under Stalin were Russian, but again they were profoundly Sovietized, portrayed in relation to the Revolution and the Party. In the post-war period they also began to be placed in a more multi-national context. Especially the Decembrists and Chernyshevskii, the former having been exiled in non-Russian areas, but also literary figures such as Pushkin and Lermontov, were portrayed as enlighteners who brought advanced ideas to non-Russian peoples. This was part of the general trend that emphasized Russia as the leading nation, but was combined with an increased emphasis on non-Russian enlighteners, cultural figures who worked with their Russian counterparts to pull their peoples out of ignorance.[32]

The culmination of the revolutionary genealogy was of course Lenin. He was portrayed as the first and, with the exception of Stalin, the only revolutionary to combine the roles of professional revolutionary and leader of the masses. After his death in 1924 the legitimacy of the Soviet state and of his successors was based in large part on the rise of the cult of Lenin. The fight between Stalin, Trotsky and others over the succession was in large part a fight between revolutionary biographies, with each trying to demonstrate their closeness to Lenin. As Tucker points out, Trotsky lost in part by portraying himself as an equal to Lenin, while Stalin maintained the proper respect.[33]

---

[30] Barber, Soviet Historians in Crisis, pp. 84-86; Shteppa, Russian Historians and the Soviet State, p. 147. Shteppa, p. 176 also points out that, in the spirit of the new emphasis on the Soviet genesis of all progressive events, Chernyshevsky was portrayed as having arrived at marxist conclusions *independently* of any influence from Marx.

[31] Volodymyr Varlamov, 'Bakunin and the Russian Jacobins and Blanquists,' in Black, ed., op. cit., pp. 329-333; Pankratova, op. cit., vol. II, p. 244; Zhdanov, op. cit., pp. 30-34.

[32] Tillett, op. cit., pp. 387-402.

After Stalin had eliminated his rivals he began to take over many of the elements of the cult of Lenin. Lenin himself moved into the background, taking his place beside Marx and Engels as a heroic ancestor, while Stalin took centre stage as the active force behind the revolution.[34] Lenin continued to be glorified (although to a lesser extent than during the 1920's), but those portrayals almost inevitably had Stalin in a prominent position advising and helping Lenin. In stalinist historical culture the role played by Trotsky in the revolution was largely taken over by Stalin.

The new interpretation is most prominently laid out in the Short Course. While Lenin is ostensibly the central figure in the development of the Party, at key moments it is always Stalin who initiates events. For example, the Baku strike of 1904 with which Stalin was involved is cited as the initial event in the rise of revolution that culminated in the following year.[35] The formation of the Bolsheviks is dated to 1912, the year in which Stalin was elected to the Central Committee, rather than the more conventional date of 1903. During the Revolution in 1917 Stalin intervenes in two key instances to ensure that events unfold as they should. With Lenin in hiding, Stalin gives the initial order to overthrow the Provisional Government.[36] Finally, on the day of the Revolution Stalin gives the order to defend the offices of *Rabochy Put* against government forces, enabling the Bolsheviks to put out the paper that called the people into the streets.[37] In each case, as the conventions of factionalism dictate, Stalin succeeds in spite of, or against, the best efforts of Trotsky and his gang to sabotage the Revolution. Lenin remains as the spirit of the Revolution, but Stalin becomes its maker.

---

[33] Tucker, Stalin as Revolutionary, pp. 354-362. See also Nina Tumarkin, Lenin Lives! The Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia, (Cambridge Mass., 1983), pp. 209-211 for a discussion of the use of the figure of Lenin by the various competing interests.

[34] Ibid., pp. 249-251.

Over the course of the 1930's, and especially after the Purges, Stalin was left virtually alone as a living hero of the Revolution. All of the other major figures had either died or, more commonly, been shot as traitors, discredited as symbols of Revolution. In one of the more telling instances of the ways in which stalinist historical culture functioned a new hero arose, one who embodied all the traits of the perfect revolutionary. He went by only one name: Maxim.

---

[35] Short Course, p. 56.

[36] Ibid., p. 196.

[37] Ibid., pp. 207-208.

Maxim was first introduced to the Soviet public in 1935 in the film *The Youth of Maxim*, followed by *The Return of Maxim* in 1937 and *The Vyborg Side* in 1939. The series was extremely popular throughout the Soviet Union, for many forming their views of the development of the Revolution in much the same way that Chapaev formed their views of the civil war. The three films followed Maxim, a dashing Bolshevik, through his youthful idealism in the aftermath of the 1905 Revolution, to his professional revolutionary activities at the start of World War I, and finally during the Revolution itself. In the final film, set in 1917, Lenin, Stalin and Sverdlov all made appearances, establishing Maxim as one of the primary 'sons' of these 'fathers.'

Apart from his heroic deeds, the most notable feature of Maxim was that he was a fictional character. There were numerous examples of people thinking the actor who played Maxim was in fact a heroic revolutionary. A remote village in Siberia nominated Maxim as their candidate for Supreme Soviet. In general, for many he *was* one of the actual heroes of the Revolution. The slaughter of virtually all of the Old Bolsheviks did not prevent its history from being presented in all its glory.[38]

At first glance the story of Maxim would seem to be one of the better examples of the diabolical lengths to which Stalin would go to fool the people, cement his power, and cover his crimes. However, as has been pointed out on a number of occassions, the relationship between Stalin and stalinist culture was more complex. Nowhere is this clearer than in the reminiscence of Grigori Kozintsev, one of the creators of Maxim, of the preview of the film for an audience that included Stalin.

> A voice rose several times during the preview. I tried hard to make out the words and grasp their meaning. This was not easy, for sharp, sometimes indignant comments were mixed with approving ones. But the anger and praise had no relation to the quality of the film. Gradually I came to realize that Stalin was watching the film not as a pictured story but as real events, as things being done before his eyes...[39]

Stalin, Nevskii, and Ivan IV

Stalin has appeared in a number of roles in this paper. He was the stable centre around which the history of the Party turned; he was father-figure, *bogatyr* and light; finally, he was the maker of the Revolution. All of these Stalins served to anchor the Soviet order, placing it firmly in an historical narrative through which and over which moved the figures of Stalin and the Party. None of these roles were, however, as important as that of Stalin, saviour of the nation.

---

[38] Most of the discussion of the films is taken from Neya Zorkaya, The Illustrated History of the Soviet Cinema, (New York, 1989), pp. 144-153. See also Stites, Russian Popular Culture, p. 93; Leyda, op. cit., pp. 320-323.

[39] Quoted in Zorkaya, p. 146.

Two major threats faced the eternal Soviet nation: enemies without and enemies within. In the stalinist conception of history foreign enemies were a ubiquitous threat. Socialism in one country implied an imperialist encirclement that had always been present. However, that foreign threat was, according to the logic of factionalism, only a corollary to the main threat, the spies, wreckers and saboteurs who were a necessary element in the stalinist conception of history and society.

The foreign threat was defeated by a number of forces. The frontier guards and nations were the first line of defense. Behind them stood the might of the Red Army or its historical equivalent. This might was founded on the elemental power of the Soviet motherland, an eternal nation that existed outside of time. The force that tied them all together was Stalin.

In the pre-1945 period the image of Stalin as eternal defender of the nation coalesced around a number of events and figures. The first, and the only major event that involved Stalin himself, was the Civil War battle for Tsaritsyn. During the Civil War Stalin had taken on a much greater role than he had played during the Revolution, but be proved to have little aptitude for military matters. Most of the actions in which he took a leading role ended in fiasco. Perhaps the most prominent was the during the battle for Tsaritsyn when he was recalled halfway through, his efforts a failure.[40]

During the 1930's the interpretation of the battle was dramatically altered. The first major change was that the importance of Tsaritsyn was exaggerated out of all proportion, the battle depicted as *the* turning point in the war. The importance of the other fronts was downplayed, with Tsarityn becoming the do or die battle which ultimately prevented the Whites from reaching Moscow and defeating the Revolution. The official conception of the battle was laid out in the Short Course. In the new version the strategy for the battle had initially been developed by Trotsky, but his incompetence was soon recognized and Stalin was sent to the city to set things straight. This he did, developing a brilliant new strategic plan and handing the Whites a decisive defeat.[41]

This interpretation of the battle entered into the mythology of the civil war, with Stalin emerging as the victor in the face of Trotskii's perfidy. A *novina* sums this up succinctly: "They rejected Trotsky's plan,/They accepted Comrade Stalin's plan,/.../They recognized this plan as advantageous/For the entire Soviet Union,/And for the entire Red Army."[42] The battle was thus canonized as Stalin's first great defense of the Soviet Union against foreign enemies, as well as against Trotsky.[43] In commemoration of Stalin's great deed the city was renamed in his honour, setting the stage for a future great battle.[44]

---

[40] Tucker, Stalin as Revolutionary, pp. 190-197.

[41] Short Course, pp. 237-239. See Mazour, op. cit., pp. 271-273 for a discussion of the Soviet historiography of the battle and the course of the civil war in general.

Aleksandr Nevskii was perhaps the most powerful historical parallel to Stalin. A number of examples have already been given of portrayals or mentions of Nevskii in conjunction with the defense of Russia, especially, as in Eisenstein's film, as a defender of the eternal (Soviet) nation. Nevskii had been resurrected as a popular symbol of the Russo-Soviet state during the 1930's. He was an ideal figure in many respects as he had not played a political role in his time, which left him free of questionable ideological baggage.

During the war Nevskii became the greatest historical predecessor to Stalin, defender of the nation. As we saw in the previous chapter, Nevskii was mentioned in speeches, depicted in art and written about in literature and popular biographies. He was linked to Stalin through a genealogy that included Peter the Great and the generals Kutuzov and Suvorov. A number of lesser figures supported these great leaders, including such folk heroes as Ivan Susanin who, during the Polish invasion in the early 17th century, lured a group of Poles deep into the Russian woods, sacrificing himself to save the nation.[45]

---

[42] N.V. Kigachev, 'Denikin's Retreat,' quoted in Miller, op. cit., pp. 56-57. *Noviny* were similar to the traditional *byliny* (see chapter 3), but were dedicated to Soviet themes.

[43] Another example is the 1942 film The Defense of Tsaritsyn (see Kenez, op. cit., p. 230).

[44] The change occurred in 1925, the same year that Petrograd became Leningrad. See G.R.F. Bursa, 'Political Changes of Names of Soviet Towns,' in The Slavonic and East European Review, 63:2 (1985), p. 168. The article as a whole discusses the constant renaming of places throughout the Stalin period.

Over the course of the war a number of occasions arose where the historical parallels could be invoked once again. The battle for Moscow in the early part of the war marks the first such event. In Alexei Tolstoy's wartime writing, for example, Stalin becomes the eternal defender of the country. "[O]nce more, as at Poltava, the voice rang out that stirs the heart of every Russian, of every Soviet citizen to great deeds of valour."[46] At Poltava the human voice was that of Peter the Great, but in the context of the article it is metaphorically the voice of Stalin that echoes through the ages.

The greatest of the battles against the Nazis was the second defense of Tsaritsyn, the battle for Stalingrad. Again Tolstoy, against all historical evidence, draws the connection. "The Germans understood the importance of

---

[45] He was commonly associated with partisans, as was mentioned in the previous chapter in connection with Zoia.

[46] Tolstoy, 'Faith in Victory,' [Dec. 8, 1942] in op. cit., p. 49.

Tsaritsyn as far back as 1918"[47] when Stalin's "defence of Tsaritsyn saved the revolution and saved Russia."[48] Once again Stalin's plans confounded the Germans evil intentions and saved the country. That battle marked an important turning point in the war, but also in cultural life of the country. Once the tide of war had turned the official stalinist cultural line was reasserted.[49] In Simonov's Days and Nights, for example, Stalin is portrayed in his rightful place as leader and inspiration in the war effort in the present, and as the culmination of a long series of heroes. The relatively autonomous and heterogeneous elements that had entered into the historical culture in the early part of the war were gone.

The relationship of historical figures such as Nevskii to Stalin is analogous to earlier Christian imagery. In his discussion of the development of the image of the Tsar in Russia Michael Cherniavsky describes how princes attained saintly status. "[T]he active warrior-princes, such as Alexander [Nevskii] imitated Christ by fulfilling the highest potential of their imperial status."[50] The imperial role was primarily a military one. In this image of the prince "[d]eath for country and death for Christ were equivalent."[51] The portrayal of Nevskii in stalinist historical culture considered him in much the same fashion, only it was his relationship to Stalin and not to Christ that determined his status. As we have seen, in stalinist culture death for country and death for Stalin were not tragic events. They were redeemed by their participation in the progressive historical struggle.

---

[47] Tolstoy, 'Stalingrad,' [March 10, 1943] in op. cit., p. 81.

[48] Ibid., p. 82.

[49] Brooks, op. cit., pp. 21-24 and Spring, op. cit, pp. 284-288 discuss the reassertion of the official line in newspapers and newsreel.

[50] Michael Cherniavsky, Tsar and People, (New York, 1969), pp. 17-23, quote p. 22.

The rise of the Tsarist state and the elevation of Moscow to the status of the Third Rome after the fall of Constantinople led to a reconfiguration of the myth of the ruler. "Now not only the fate of Russia but the fate of the world depended upon the activities of the Russian prince," a fact that imparted an entirely new level of sanctity to the leader of the state.[52] This shift was given a similar importance in the stalinist historical universe. The transformation of Russia from a collection of principalities into an empire, seen in the 1920's as a sign of the spread of Tsarist oppression, became one of the defining moments of Soviet history. The activities of the early state-building Tsars, Ivan III, Basil III and especially Ivan IV, were portrayed as positive developments leading to the eventual formation of the Soviet Union.

---

[51] Ibid., p. 25.

[52] Ibid., pp. 35-40, quote p. 40.

The importance of Nevskii in stalinist history was for his defense of the nation from external enemies. This was partly the case for Ivan IV as well. His victories in the Livonian war offered a fruitful parallel to the annexation of the Baltic states in 1939, but that was not seen as his major acheivement.[53] Rather, it was his state-building activities that were glorified, achievements that were accomplished primarily against the ever-present internal enemies. The importance placed on Ivan's role can be seen in the plans being made in the late 1930's, under Stalin's supervision, for a massive art exhibition entitled 'Our Motherland.' The first part of the exhibition was historical, entitled 'From the Glorious Past of our Motherland,' the first section of which would have been on 'Ivan the Terrible and his struggle for the Creation of the Russian State.'[54]

An examination of two major portrayals of Ivan IV can serve as examples of his place in the historical culture of the period. The first is the major historical work written about him, R. Vipper's Ivan Grozny.[55] Vipper's study, originally released in 1922, but totally revised for its republication in 1942, is a classic example of stalinist historiography. A number of themes emerge strongly from the work. The first is historiographical. He disputes all of the negative historical portrayals of Ivan IV attributing them to false sources, bad luck and foreign attempts to defame and undermine Russia and the Soviet Union.[56] Part of the blame is even laid on translation. He claims that in Russian the epithet *grozny* sounds "extremely majestic," but that part of Ivan's bad reputation is because it was translated "by the vulgar words...'Ivan the Terrible.'"[57]

---

[53] The links between Ivan IV's Livonian campaign and the annexation of the Baltics was drawn most directly in Valentin Kostylev's 1941 novel on Ivan, *Moskva v pokhode*, part one of a trilogy. See Bernd Uhlenbruch, 'The Annexation of History: Eisenstein and the Ivan Grozny Cult of the 1940s,' in Gunther, *op. cit*., p. 269.

[54] Cullerne Bown, *Art Under Stalin*, pp. 103-104.

[55] See Mehnert, *op. cit*., pp. 84-86 for a discussion of the historical debates surrounding the resurection of Ivan IV.

Having put aside the negative portrayals of Ivan, Vipper proceeds to explain the positive nature of his rule. He emphasizes the fact that Russia was under constant threat from all sides, making both a strong state and the suppression of internal dissent crucial. This is where Ivan takes on his most contemporary aspect. His creation of the *oprichnina* (a sort of secret police) was entirely justified by the dangers faced by the state. Vipper even describes "the reformatory, constructive character of the institutions which...were known as the Oprichnina."[58] If anything Ivan underestimated the dangers he faced and certainly "cannot be accused of being oversuspicious."[59]

---

[56] R. Vipper, Ivan Grozny, (Moscow, 1947), pp. 230-246.

[57] Ibid., p. 234. *Grozny* does mean 'awesome' more than 'terrible,' but Ivan's reputation was certainly not created by mistranslation.

[58] Ibid., p. 165. The massacres that could not be explained away by foreign slander Vipper attributes to over-zealousness and disobedience on the part of a few participants in the *oprichnina*. Ivan IV never knew and was in fact deeply troubled by them. (pp. 127-128)

The most important role played by the *oprichnina* was in uncovering and rooting out the Boyar (noble) opposition to Ivan, an opposition that was funded from abroad. Throughout his work Vipper emphasizes the widespread treason that constantly threatened Ivan.[60] This came out more strongly in Kostylev's novel on Ivan IV and in other historical portrayals. Kurbsky, originally Ivan's advisor, is cast in the role of Trotsky. His eventual break with the Tsar and his exile in Poland are seen as evidence of treasonous intentions *from the outset*. As always in stalinist historical culture, opposition at any time implies opposition at all times.[61]

The historical parallels between Ivan IV and Stalin should be clear. The links were occasionally directly drawn, but in general they were not directly emphasized. The changes in the conception of Ivan were always justified on the grounds of historical accuracy while the connections were made through similar language, themes and symbols.[62] Nevertheless, the similarities were clear, meaning that any attempts to portray the reign of Ivan IV had to be undertaken with great care.

---

[59] Ibid., p. 146.

[60] Ibid., esp. pp. 129-166.

[61] George Backer, The Deadly Parallel: Stalin and Ivan the Terrible, (New York, 1950), pp. 165-177; Uhlenbruch, op. cit., pp. 273-274.

[62] Ibid., pp. 272-273.

Sergei Eisenstein overstepped the bounds.

After the success of Aleksandr Nevskii Eisenstein was commissioned to direct a film on Ivan IV as well. The first part of the film was released just before the end of the war. On the surface it followed the official conception of Ivan IV, but it introduced some different elements. The primary change was that the film had strong tragic overtones. Ivan's actions are ostensibly justified, but he is portrayed as tormented and unhappy. As a result the historical portrayal rings false.

The first part of the film was released, but changes in the second part were expected. However, instead of redeeming himself with a 'correct' portrayal of the later part of Ivan's reign, Eisenstein went even further. In the second part the lines between good and evil are gone. The *oprichnina* is at best an ambiguous force, while Ivan himself becomes a Hamlet-like figure, tormented and tragic. In addition, a number of other questionable themes are introduced, most notably the portrayal of the attempted assassination of Ivan. The Tsar foils the attempt by dressing up his Boyar rival Staritskii in royal garb, which leads the assassin to kill Staritskii rather than Ivan. This clearly was a veiled reference to Stalin's suspicious involvement in the deaths of Kirov, Frunze and others, assassinated on Stalin's orders to further his own agenda.[63]

---

[63] The discussion above owes much to Uhlenbruch, op. cit., pp. 275-280. See also Kenez, op. cit., pp. 218-220. Loseff, op. cit., pp. 62-64 discusses the film as an Aesopian parable.

The subversive quality of Eisenstein's film meant that it was not released until 1958. It is an extremely subtle portrayal of the Tsar, but one that, in the historical culture of the period, represented a clear indictment of Stalin. Eisenstein and the actor who played Ivan, Cherkassov, were summoned for a talk with Stalin. Cherkassov's reminiscences provide us with one of the clearest statements of Stalin's view of his relationship to Ivan.

> In his analysis of the policies of Ivan the Terrible, Comrade Stalin noted that Ivan IV was a great and wise ruler who protected his country from the ravages of foreign influence and strove to unite Russia...Comrade Stalin also noted the progressive role of the *oprichnina*...As for Ivan the Terrible's mistakes, Stalin remarked that one of them was his inability to eliminate the five last great feudal families...Joseph Vissarionovich added, with a touch of humour, "God got in Ivan's way. Ivan liquidated one feudal family and one boyar clan, only to waste the rest of the year repenting and confessing his 'sins' instead of pursuing even more draconian measures."[64]

Stalin did not have the same hesitations.

Cherniavsky describes the reign of Ivan the Terrible as the period in which the image of the Tsar coalesced around a new concept of power and authority. The model of the imperial rulers of Rome and Constantinople joined the saintly image that had previously deominated. "The twin nature of the ruler were neither sundered nor abolished, but merged, for the human nature of the prince was as exalted as his divine office."[65]

---

[64] From N.K. Cherkassov, Notes of a Soviet Actor, quoted in Tarkhanov and Kavtaradze, op. cit., p. 141.

[65] Cherniavsky, op. cit., pp. 51-51, quote p. 52.

Stalin's victory in the Great Patriotic War enabled him to assume Ivan's mantle. He became leader of both the eternal people and the dynamic nation, with his authority both bestowed from outside and created by him. The twin conceptions of history and the nation that run through the entire stalinist period were neither sundered nor abolished, but merged in the figure of Stalin.

CONCLUSION

The successful conclusion for the Soviet Union of the war in 1945 and the reassertion of stalinist values and control in the aftermath left a significantly changed historical culture in its wake. The pre-war period had been one of great (and deadly) change. The war brought the Soviet Union closer to extinction than at any time since the Civil War. In both periods Stalin and the Party had needed the help of history in order to maintain their position, a situation that changed after the war. Isaac Deutscher sums it up succinctly:

> From 1941 to 1943 Stalin may have felt flattered, whenever one compared him with Peter the Great, and he was perhaps proud of the parallels which were made between both of the Great Patriotic Wars in 1812 and 1941. He gained in prestige, by being hoisted onto the shoulders of his predecessors. However, as the victor of this war, he no longer needed all that. The Peters, Kutuzovs and Alexanders were now all dwarfs, compared to Stalin.[1]

Stalin's rise to the top of the historical pyramid implied a changed conception of history. Previously history had formed a parallel and a legitimation for actions and events in the present and future. While it tended towards stasis, it remained dynamic, continually changing along with changes in the (eternal) present. In the post-war period it largely achieved that stasis. Stalin's place in the centre of history was cemented, with history becoming another monument to his grandeur.

---

[1] Isaac Deutscher, Stalin. A Political Biography, (Oxford, 1962), p. 591.

This tendency had been apparent from the beginning. The circular or whirlpool organization of stalinist historical culture was profoundly hierarchical, integrating society around a single, stable centre, both spatial and temporal. "Stalinist culture ascribed to time a final, universal value, effectively freezing it as in an eternal utopian and iconic present."[2]

The spatial and temporal stasis achieved in the post-war period is evident in the architecture of the period. Mention has already been made of the exhibitions through which the conceptions of nation and the Soviet national order were expressed. In the reconstruction of the country after the war the dominant values of the historical culture were equally clearly conceptualized.

Prior to the war the Soviet city was seen as a dynamic, revolutionary space. In 1935 the authors of the General Plan for Moscow wrote that "Moscow is the Red Capital of the Soviet Union, where the warm heart of world revolution beats with ardour, bringing freedom to all of exploited and oppressed humanity."[3] Revolutionary change, the historical uniqueness of the Soviet Union, and its internationalist role are all emphasized.

---

[2] Spencer Golub, The Recurrence of Fate: Theatre & Memory in Twentieth-Century Russia, (Iowa, 1994), p. 162.

[3] Quoted in Tarkhanov and Kavtaradze, op. cit., p. 86.

After the war the focus shifted inwards, with domestic architectural traditions predominating in the various national republics. In 1947 D. Arkin, a Red Army architect, issued the following call: "Cities are waiting for new ensembles, squares and parks, memorials to outstanding warriors, monuments immortalizing great battles and beroic defences, and new public buildings whose architecture will reflect a powerful theme of military heroism and glory."[4] The monumentalization of the Soviet Union proceeded apace.

The most significant feature of the new architecture was its almost total emphasis on its historical position. According to the logic of the historical culture, now that Stalin and the Soviet Union had truly become the pinnacle of history, that history was entirely and unproblematically absorbed into the present. Architects quoted from any and all historical periods, creating a Soviet Union that encompassed all of human history. In the process, Soviet cities took on the appearance of monuments to themselves. "The overriding aim of the [Stalin] period was to turn itself into a museum: the laws of the dialectic had been changed by official decree and time had stopped."[5]

The new monumental cities were designed not around the inhabitants, but around the need of the culture to celebrate itself. Buildings, parks, and monuments all reflected the new grandeur, but so did the layout of the cities, especially Moscow. Streets were only secondarily for transport: their layout and design was primarily geared towards the facilitation of the processions and parades through which stalinist culture was most vividly expressed and propagated.[6]

---

[4] Quoted in ibid., p. 102.

[5] Ibid., pp. 109-111, quote p. 160.

The most elaborate of these celebrations took place on the various national holidays in the Soviet calendar. They were dedicated to a variety of historical events and social groups, everything from Lenin's birthday to the day of the metallurgist.[7] The two most significant days, as well as the most highly centralized and controlled, were May Day (May 1) and the Anniversary of the Revolution (November 7), which were joined by Victory Day (May 8) after 1945.[8] The celebrations surrounding these holidays included mandatory dramatized meetings at places of work, massive press and radio coverage, public displays of art, posters and theatre, and the familiar parades before the national leadership in Moscow, or the regional and local leaderships in other areas.[9]

The two major celebrations were mirrored by a number of others. Especially in the countryside, but also in the city, the celebration of International Women's Day (March 8) was a major event.[10] Specific historical events, most notably the 100th anniversary of Pushkin's death in 1937 and the 800th anniversary of the founding of Moscow in 1947, were also massive events.[11] Contemporary events, including elections, end-of-year or harvest meetings, and the regional and national congresses for stakhanovites and other heroic workers and collective farmers, were also accompanied by similar if more localized rituals.[12]

---

[6] Paperny, *op. cit*., pp. 230-232.

[7] Christel Lane, *The Rites of Rulers: Ritual in Industrial Society--The Soviet Case*, (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 289-290 gives a list of all of the significant dates.

[8] *Ibid*., pp. 159-160.

[9] *Ibid*., pp. 156-160; Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants*, pp. 268-271; Rosalinde Sartorti, 'Stalinism and Carnival: Organisation and Aesthetics of Political Holidays,' in Gunter, *op. cit*., pp. 67-70.

The celebrations had a number of significant features. They involved a ritualization of social relationships, a way in which the conservative, statist, leader-oriented, and nationalist form of stalinist culture could be reinforced. It was a 'model for' rather than a 'model of' society, one which, by its very nature, emphasized collective values.[13] Those values were firmly situated in the stalinist historical narrative. The events being celebrated were in the past, but the focus of the parade was the eternal present, and primarily the figure of Stalin himself or, outside of Moscow, one of the 'little Stalins' who reprsented him in the culture of the time.

---

[10] Fitzpatrick, Stalin's Peasants, 274-279.

[11] Binns, op. cit., p. 600. The cult of Pushkin that developed under Stalin has not been dealt with here, but it represents an interesting example both of the nature and roots of socialist realism, and of the absorption of Russian historical figures. See Paul Debreczeny, '"*Zhitie Aleksandra Bodinskogo*": Pushkin's Elevation to Sainthood in Soviet Culture,' in Thomas Lahusen, ed., Late Soviet Culture, (Durham, 1993), pp. 47-68. He mentions that unlike the official holidays, Pushkin's anniversary was accompanied by a massive, spontaneous public outpouring of joy and sentiment, at least in the major Russian centres. (p. 59)

[12] Fitzpatrick, Stalin's Peasants, pp. 279-284; Binns, op. cit., p. 604.

The parade drew together many the tendencies of stalinist culture. Attendance was in most cases mandatory, presenting a spectacle of an enforced egalitarian society and fulfilling the culture's "*total strategy of averaging* and its elimination of all enclaves of autonomy."[14] This was reinforced by one of the most distinctive aspects of the parades, namely their lack of spectators.[15] In a sense it represented a fulfillment of the avant-garde 'curtainless stage,' a performance in which audience and spectacle could merge. The stalinist parade accomplished this absorption of the spectator into the spectacle, but only in order to reinforce a different form of hierarchy. All social difference was effaced save for one: the relationship of the people to the great Soviet leader.[16] In the parade 'the people' were truly one, united in and through Stalin.

---

[13] Lane, op. cit., pp. 24-25; Thomas Cushman, 'Ritual and Conformity in Soviet Society,' in Journal of Communist Studies, 4:2 (1988), pp. 174-176. 'Kollektiv'nost' as opposed to 'individual'nost' was the principal Soviet value.

[14] Dobrenko, op. cit., p. 802.

[15] Sartorti, 'Stalinism and Carnival,' p. 63.

---

[16] Spencer Golub, The Recurrence of Fate: Theatre & Memory in Twentieth-Century Russia, (Iowa, 1994), pp. 171-172.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adler, Max K. *Marxist Linguistic Theory and Communist Practice: A sociolinguistic study*. Hamburg: Helmut Buske Verlag, 1980.

Alexiev, Alexander R., 'Soviet Nationalities in German Wartime Strategy, 1941-1945,' in Alexiev and S. Enders Wimbush, eds., *Ethnic Minorities in the Red Army*, (Boulder, 1988), pp. 69-120.

Alexiev, Alexander R. and S. Enders Wimbush, eds. *Ethnic Minorities in the Red Army*. Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1988.

Allworth, Edward, ed. *Ethnic Russia in the USSR: The Dilemma of Dominance*. New York: Pergamon Press, 1980.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition. London and New York: Verso, 1991.

Atkinson, Dorothy, Alexander Dallin and Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, eds. *Women in Russia*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977.

Austerlitz, Robert, 'Folklore, Nationality, and the Twentieth Century in Siberia and the Soviet Far East,' in Felix Oinas, ed., *Folklore, Nationalism and Politics*, (Columbus, 1978), pp. 139-146.

Azrael, Jeremy R., ed. *Soviet Nationality Policies and Practices*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1978.

Backer, George. *The Deadly Parallel: Stalin and Ivan the Terrible*. New York: Random House, 1950.

Bailes, Kendall E. *Technology and Society under Lenin and Stalin: Origins of the Soviet Technical Intelligentsia, 1917-1941*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978.

Balibar, Etienne, 'The Nation Form: History and Ideology,' in Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, eds., *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, (London, 1991), pp. 86-106.

Balibar, Etienne and Immanuel Wallerstein, eds. *Race, Nation,Class: Ambiguous Identities*. London: Verso, 1991 [1988].

Barber, John. *Soviet Historians in Crisis, 1928-1932*. New

York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1981.

-------, 'Working-Class Culture and Political Culture in the 1930's,' in Hans Gunther, ed., The Culture of the Stalin Period, (London, 1990), pp. 3-14.

Bell, John, 'Giving Birth to the New Soviet Man: Politics and Obstetrics in the USSR,' in Slavic Review, 40:1 (1981), pp. 1-16.

Benjamin, Walter. Iluminations, edited by Hannah Arendt, translated by Harry Zohn. New York: Schocken Books, 1968.

Berdyaev, Nicolas. The Origin of Russian Communism, translated by R.M. French. London: Geoffrey Bles, 1937.

Billington, James H. The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretive History of Russian Culture. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970.

Binns, Christopher A.P., 'The Changing Face of Power: Revolution and Accomodation in the Development of the Soviet Ceremonial System: Part I,' in Man, 14:4 (Cec., 1979), pp. 585-606.

Black, C.E., 'History and Politics in the Soviet Union,' in C.E. Black, ed. Rewriting Russian History, (London, 1957), pp. 3-31.

Black, C.E., ed. Rewriting Russian History. London: Atlantic Press, 1957.

Boffa, Guisseppe. The Stalin Phenomenon, translated by Nicholas Fersen. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992 [1982].

Brown, Edward J. Russian Literature Since the Revolution, revised edition. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982.

Brooks, Jeffrey, '*Pravda* Goes to War,' in Richard Stites, ed., Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia, (Bloomington, 1995), pp. 9-27.

Buckley, Mary. Women and Ideology in the Soviet Union. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989.

Burbank, Jane, 'Controversies over Stalinism: Searching for a Soviet Society,' in Politics and Society 19(3) Sept., 1991, pp. 325-340.

Bursa, G.R.F., 'Political Changes of Names of Soviet Towns,' in *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 63:2 (April, 1985), pp. 161-193.

Byrnes, Robert F., 'Creating the Soviet Historical Profession, 1917-1934,' in *Slavic Review* 50(2) Summer, 1991, pp. 297-308.

-------, 'Soviet Historians Views of Kliuchevskii,' in *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 20(3-4) 1986, pp. 437-454.

Carrere d'Encausse, Helene, 'Determinants and Parameters of Soviet Nationality Policy,' in Jeremy Azrael, ed., *Soviet Nationality Policies and Practices*, (New York, 1978), pp. 39-59.

Castillo, Greg, 'Peoples at an Exhibition: Soviet Architecture and the National Question,' in *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 94:3 (Summer, 1995), pp. 715-746.

Cherniavsky, Michael. *Tsar and People: Studies in Russian Myths*. New York: Random House, 1969.

Clark, Katerina, 'The City versus the Countryside in Soviet Peasant Literature of the Twenties: A Duel of Utopias,' in Abbott Gleason, et al, eds., *Bolshevik Culture*, (Bloomington, 1985), pp. 175-189.

-------. *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1981.

Clark, Ronald W. *Lenin: The Man Behind the Mask*. London: Faber and Faber, 1988.

Clark, Toby, 'The 'new man's' body: a motif in early Soviet culture,' in Matthew Cullerne Bown and Brandon Taylor, eds., *Art of the Soviets*, (Manchester, 1993), pp. 33-50.

Clements, Barbara Evans, 'The Birth of the New Soviet Woman,' in Abbott Gleason, et al, eds., *Bolshevik Culture*, (Bloomington, 1985), pp. 220-237.

Cohen, Stephen F., 'Bolshevism and Stalinism,' in Robert Tucker, ed., *Stalinism: Essays in Historical Interpretation*, (New York, 1977)a, pp. 3-29.

The Complete Films of Eisenstein, translated by John Hetherington. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1974.

Cullerne Bown, Matthew. *Art Under Stalin*. Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1991.

Cullerne Bown, Matthew and Brandon Taylor, eds. Art of the Soviets: Painting, sculpture and architecture in a one-party state, 1917-1992. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993.

Cultural Progress in the U.S.S.R.: Statistical Returns. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1958.

Curran, Susan L. and Dmitry Ponomareff, 'Managing the Ethnic Factor in the Russian and Soviet Armed Forces: A Historical Overview,' in Alexander R. Alexiev and S. Enders Wimbush, eds., Ethnic Minorities in the Red Army, (Boulder, 1988), pp. 9-68.

Cushman, Thomas O., 'Ritual and Conformity in Soviet Society,' in Journal of Communist Studies, 4:2 (June, 1988), pp. 162-180.

Dallet, Sylvie, 'Historical Time in Russian, Armenian, Georgian and Kirghiz Cinema,' in Anna Lawton, ed., The Red Screen: Politics, Society, Art in Soviet Cinema, (London, 1992), pp. 301-331.

Debreczeny, Paul, '*"Zhitie Aleksandra Boldinskogo"*: Pushkin's Elevation to Sainthood in Soviet Culture,' in Thomas Lahusen, ed., Late Soviet Culture, (Durham, 1993), pp. 47-68.

Deutscher, Isaac. Stalin. A Political Biography. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962.

Dobrashenko, Sergei, 'Soviet Documentary Film, 1917-1940,' in Nicholas Pronay and D.W. Spring, eds., Propaganda, Politics and Film, 1918-45, (London, 1982), pp. 249-269.

Dobrenko, Evgeny, 'The Disaster of Middlebrow Taste, or, Who "Invented" Socialist Realism?' in South Atlantic Quarterly, 94:3 (Summer, 1995), pp. 773-806.

Dodge, Norton D. and Murray Feshbach, 'The Role of Women in Soviet Agriculture,' in Beatrice Farnsworth and Lynne Viola, eds., Russian Peasant Women, (Oxford, 1992), pp. 236-270.

Dunham, Vera S. In Stalin's Time: Middleclass values in Soviet fiction. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.

Dunlop, John B. The Faces of Contemporary Russian Nationalism. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.

Enteen, George M., 'Marxist Historians During the Cultural Revolution: A Case Study of Professional In-fighting,' in Sheila Fitzpatrick, ed., Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928-1931, (Bloomington, 1978), pp. 154-168.

-------, 'Marxists versus Non-Marxists: Soviet Historiography in the 1920's,' in Slavic Review, 35(1), March 1976, pp. 91-110.

-------. The Soviet Scholar-Bureaucrat: M.N. Pokrovskii and the Society of Marxist Historians. University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978.

-------, 'The Stalinist Conception of Communist Party History,' in Studies in Soviet Thought, 37(1989), pp. 259-274.

-------, 'Writing Party History in the USSR: the Case of E.M. Iaroslavskii,' in Journal of Contemporary History, 21 (1986), pp. 321-339.

Enteen, George M., Tatiana Gorn and Cheryl Kern. Soviet Historians and the Study of Russian Imperialism. University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1979.

Farnsworth, Beatrice, 'Bolshevik Alternatives and the Soviet Family: The 1926 Marriage Law Debate,' in Dorothy Atkinson, et al, eds., Women in Russia, (Stanford, 1977), pp. 139-166.

-------, 'Village Women Experience the Revolution,' in Abbott Gleason, et al, eds., Bolshevik Culture, (Bloomington, 1985), pp. 238-260.

Farnsworth, Beatrice and Lynne Viola, eds. Russian Peasant Women. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Fitzpatrick, Sheila, 'Ascribing Class: The Construction of Social Identity in Soviet Russia,' in Journal of Modern History, 65 (Dec., 1993), pp. 745-770.

-------, 'The Civil War as a Formative Experience,' in Abbott Gleason, et al, eds., Bolshevik Culture, (Bloomington, 1985), pp. 57-76.

-------. 'Culture and Politics under Stalin: A Reappraisal,' in Slavic Review 35(2) June, 1976, pp. 211-231.

-------. Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921-1934. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

-------, 'Stalin and the Making of a New Elite, 1928-1939,' in Slavic Review 38(3) Sept., 1979, pp. 377-402.

-------. Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Fitzpatrick, Sheila, ed. Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928-1931. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978.

Four Soviet War Plays. Translated by Gerard Shelley. London: Hutchinson and Co. Publishing Ltd., 1959.

Fox, Michael, 'Political Culture, Purges, and Proletarianization at the Institute of Red Professors, 1921-1929,' in Russian Review, 52:1 (1993), pp. 20-42.

Furmanov, Dmitry. Chapayev, translated by George Kittell and Jeanette Kittell. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, no date [1923].

Gasiorowska, Xenia. Women in Soviet Fiction, 1917-1964. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1968.

Gleason, Abbott, Peter Kenez, and Richard Stites, eds. Bolshevik Culture: Experiment and Order in the Russian Revolution. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985.

Goldman, Wendy, 'Freedom and its Consequences: The Debate on the Soviet Family Code of 1926,' in Russian History/Histoire Russe, 11:4 (Winter, 1984), pp. 362-388.

Golub, Spencer. The Recurrence of Fate: Theatre & Memory in Twentieth-Century Russia. Iowa City: Iowa University Press, 1994.

Goble, Paul, 'Readers, Writers, and Republics: The Structural Basis of Non-Russian Literary Politics,' in Lubomyr Hajda and Mark Beissinger, The Nationalities Factor in Soviet Politics and Society, (Boulder, 1990), pp. 131-147.

Gooding, John, 'The Decembrists in the Soviet Union,' in Soviet Studies, 40:2 (1988), pp. 196-209.

Groys, Boris, 'The Birth of Socialist Realism from the Spirit of the Russian Avant-Garde,' in Hans Gunther, ed., The Culture of the Stalin Period, (London, 1990), pp. 122-148.

-------. The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond, translated by Charles Rougle. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992 [1988].

Guldberg, Jorn, 'Socialist Realism as Institutional Practice: Observations on the Interpretation of the Works of Art of the Stalin Period,' in Hans Gunther, ed., *The Culture of the Stalin Period*, (London, 1990), pp. 149-177.

Gunther, Hans, ed. *The Culture of the Stalin Period*. London: The Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1990.

-------, 'Education and Conversion: The Road to the New Man in the Totalitarian *Bildungsroman*,' in Hans Gunther, ed., *The Culture of the Stalin Period*, (London, 1990), pp. 193-209.

Hajda, Lubomyr and Mark Beissinger, eds. *The Nationalities Factor in Soviet Politics and Society*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1990.

Hampton, Timothy. *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Litterature*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990.

Heller, Leonid, 'A World of Prettiness: Socialist Realism and its Aesthetic Categories,' in *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 94:3 (Summer, 1995), pp. 687-714.

Heller, Leonid and Antoine Baudin, 'Le Realisme Socialiste Comme Organisation du Champ Culturel,' in *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Sovietique*, XXXIV:3 (July-Sept., 1993), pp. 307-344.

History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks): Short Course. Edited by a commission of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(B). New York: International Publishers, 1939.

Holz, Wolfgang, 'Allegory and iconography in Socialist Realist painting,' in Matthew Cullerne Bown and Brandon Taylor, eds., *Art of the Soviets*, (Manchester, 1993), pp. 73-85.

Huttenbach, Henry R., ed. *Soviet Nationality Policies*. London: Mansell Publishing Ltd., 1990.

Iampolski, Mikhail, 'Censorship as the Triumph of Life,' in *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 94:3 (Summer, 1995), pp. 865-879.

Joravsky, David, 'Cultural Revolution and the Fortress Mentality,' in Abbott Gleason et al, eds., *Bolshevik Culture*, (Bloomington, 1985), pp. 93-113.

Keep, John, with the assistance of Liliana Brisby, eds. *Contemporary History in the Soviet Mirror*. London:

George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1964.

Kenez, Peter, 'Black and White: The War on Film,' in Richard Stites, ed., Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia, (Bloomington, 1995), pp. 157-175.

-------. Cinema & Soviet Society, 1917-1953. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Klymasz, Robert B., 'Folklore Politics in the Soviet Ukraine: Perspectives on Some Recent Trends and Developments,' in Felix Oinas, ed., Folklore, Nationalism, and Politics, (Columbus, 1978), pp. 97-108.

Korneichuk. The Front, in Four Soviet War Plays, (London, 1959), pp. 6-57.

-------. Guerillas of the Ukrainian Steppes, in Four Soviet War Plays, (London, 1959), pp. 176-208.

Kukryniksy. Po Vragam Mira! Moscow: Plakat, 1982.

Kuromiya, Hiroaki. Stalin's Industrial Revolution: Politics and Workers, 1928-1932. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Labour in the Land of Socialism: Stakhanovites in Conference. Moscow: Co-operative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the U.S.S.R., 1936.

Lahusen, Thomas, ed. Late Soviet Culture. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993.

Lane, Christel. The Rites of Rulers: Ritual in Industrial Society--The Soviet Case. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Lapidus, Gail, 'Educational Strategies and Cultural Revolution: The Politics of Soviet Development,' in Sheila Fitzpatrick, ed., Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928-1931, (Bloomington, 1978), pp. 78-104.

-------. Women in Soviet Society: Equality, Development, and Social Change. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.

Lawton, Anna, ed. The Red Screen: Politics, Society, Art in Soviet Cinema. London and New York: Routledge, 1992.

Lenin, Vladimir. State and Revolution. New York: International Publishers, 1932.

-------. What is to be Done? Burning Questions of Our Movement. New York: International Publishers, 1969.

Leyda, Jay. Kino: A History of the Russian and Soviet Film, third edition. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.

Lodder, Christina, 'Lenin's Plan for Monumental Propaganda,' in Matthew Cullerne Bown and Brandon Taylor, eds., Art of the Soviets, (Manchester, 1993), pp. 16-32.

Loseff, Lev. On the Beneficence of Censorship: Aesopian Language in Modern Russian Literature. Munich: Verlag Otto Sagner in Kommission, 1984.

Mackiw, Theodore, 'The Development of Ukrainian Historiography,' in Ukrainian Review, 34(2), pp. 30-40, 34(3), pp. 63-68, 34(4), pp. 54-59 (1986).

Malia, Martin. Alexander Herzen and the Birth of Russian Socialism. New York: The Universal Library, 1965.

Mally, Lynn, 'Autonomous Theatre and the Origins of Socialist Realism: The 1932 Olympiad of Autonomous Art,' in Russian Review, 52:2 (April, 1993), pp. 198-212.

Manning, Roberta, 'Women in the Soviet Countryside on the Eve of World War II, 1935-1940,' in Beatrice Farnsworth and Lynne Viola, Russian Peasant Women, (Oxford, 1992), pp. 206-235.

Marsh, Rosalind. Images of Dictatorship: Portraits of Stalin in Literature. Routledge: London and New York, 1989.

Marx, Karl. Karl Marx: Selected Writings, edited by David McLellan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Maslov, N.N., 'Short Course--An Encyclopedia of Stalin's Cult,' in Soviet Studies in History, 28(3) 1989-90, pp. 41-68.

Mazour, Anatole G. The Writing of History in the Soviet Union. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1971.

McClelland, James C., 'The Utopian and the Heroic: Divergent Paths to the Communist Educational Ideal,' in Abbott Gleason, et al, eds., Bolshevik Culture, (Bloomington, 1985), pp. 114-130.

McNeal, Robert H. Stalin's Works: An Annotated Bibliography. Stanford: Hoover Institution Bibliographical Series, 1967.

-------, 'Trotskyist Interpretations of Stalinism,' in Robert Tucker, ed., *Stalinism: Essays in Historical Interpretation*, (New York, 1977), pp. 30-52.

McReynolds, 'Dateline Stalingrad: Newspaper Correspondents at the Front,' in Richard Stites, ed., *Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia*, (Bloomington, 1995), pp. 28-43.

Mehnert, Klaus. *Stalin versus Marx: the Stalinist Historical Doctrine*. London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1952.

Miller, Frank J. *Folklore for Stalin*. Armonk and London: M.E. Sharpe, 1990.

Moore, Nigel, 'The Myth of Stalin: The Psychodynamics of its Utopian Ideals,' in *Russian History/Histoire Russe*, 11:2-3 (Summer-Fall, 1984), pp. 283-297.

Narodnoe Obrazovanie Nauka i Kultura v SSSR: Statisticheskii Sbornik. Moscow: Statistika, 1977.

Oinas, Felix J. *Essays on Russian Folklore and Mythology*. Columbus, Ohio: Slavica Publishers, Inc., 1984.

Oinas, Felix J., ed. *Folklore, Nationalism & Politics*. Columbus, Ohio: Slavica Publishers, Inc., 1972.

Paltiel, Jeremy, 'The Cult of Personality,' in *Studies in Comparative Communism*, XVI:1&2 (1983), pp.

Pankratova, A.M., ed., *A History of the U.S.S.R*. (3 vols.). Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1947.

Paperny, Vladimir, 'Moscow in the 1930's and the Emergence of a New City,' in Hans Gunther, ed., *The Culture of the Stalin Period*, (London, 1990), pp. 229-239.

Pennar, Jaan, Ivan I. Bakalo and George Z.F. Bereday. *Modernization and Diversity in Soviet Education, With Special Reference to Nationality Groups*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971.

Pethybridge, Roger. *The Social Prelude to Stalinism*. London: The Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1974.

Pilnyak, Boris, *The Naked Year*, translated by A.R. Tulloch. Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1975.

Pisiotis, Argyrios K., 'Images of Hate in the Art of War,' in Richard Stites, ed., *Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia*, (Bloomington, 1990), pp. 141-156.

Pokrovskii, M.N. Brief History of Russia. (2 vols.) Translated by D.S. Mirsky. London: Martin Lawrence Limited, 1933.

-------, '*Novye techeniia v russkoi istoricheskoi literature*,' in *Istorik-Marksist*, 7 (July, 1928), pp. 3-17.

-------. Russia in World History: Selected Essays. Edited by Roman Szporluk, translated by Roman and Mary Ann Szporluk. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1970.

Pol, K., '*Bolsheviki i dovoennyi II internatsional*,' in *Proletarskaia Revolutsiia*, 2-3 (1931), pp. 22-58; 4-5 (1931), pp. 35-79.

Pool, Jonathan, 'Soviet Language Plannin: Goals, Results, Options,' in Jeremy Azrael, ed. Soviet Nationality Policies and Practices, (New York, 1978), pp. 223-249.

Pravda. January 1930-December 1940.

Pronay, Nicholas and D.W. Spring, eds. Propaganda, Politics and Film, 1918-45. London: The Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1982.

Robin, Regine. Socialist Realism: An Impossible Aesthetic, translated by Catherine Porter. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992 [1986].

-------, 'Stalinism and Popular Culture,' in Hans Gunther, ed., The Culture of the Stalin Period, (London, 1990), pp. 15-40.

Rothstein, Robert A., 'Homeland, Home Town, and Battlefield: The Popular Song,' in Richard Stites, ed., Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia, (Bloomington, 1995), pp. 62-76.

Rubissow, Helen. The Art of Russia. New York: Philosophical Library, 1946.

Sartorti, Rosalinde, 'On the Making of Heroes, Heroines, and Saints,' in Richard Stites, ed., Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia, (Bloomington, 1995), pp. 176-193.

-------, 'Stalinism and Carnival: Organisation and Aesthetics of Political Holidays,' in Hans Gunther, ed., The Culture of the Stalin Period, (London, 1990), pp. 41-77.

Schapiro, Leonard and Peter Reddaway, eds., Paul Rosta, asst.

ed., Lenin: The Man, the Theorist, the Leader. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1967.

Seton, Marie. Sergei M. Eisenstein. London: The Bodley Head, 1952.

Sevcenko, Ihor, 'Byzantine Cultural Influences,' in C.E. Black, ed., Rewriting Russian History, (London, 1957), pp. 143-223.

Shteppa, Konstantin F., 'The "Lesser Evil" Formula,' in C.E. Black, ed., Rewriting Russian History, (London, 1957), pp. 107-120.

-------. Russian Historians and the Soviet State. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1962.

Siegelbaum, Lewis H. Stakhanovism and The Politics of Productivity in the USSR, 1935-1941. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Siegelbaum, Lewis H. and Michael Morgan, '"State" versus "Society" in Tsarist and Soviet History,' in Radical History Review (28-30) 1984, pp. 90-112.

Simonov, Konstantin. Days and Nights, translated by Joseph Barnes. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945 [1944].

-------. The Russians, in Four Soviet War Plays. London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1959.

Sinyavsky, Andrei. Soviet Civilization: A Cultural History, translated by Joanne Turnbull. New York: Arcade Publishing, 1990 [1988].

Slezkine, Yuri. Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.

-------, 'From Savages to Citizens: The Cultural Revolution in the Soviet Far North, 1928-1938,' in Slavic Review, 51:1 (1992), pp. 52-76.

Slutskii, A.G., '*Bolsheviki o germanskoe s.-d. v period ee predvoennovo krizisa*,' in *Proletarskaia Revolutsiia*, 6 (1930), pp. 38-72.

Sokolov, Y. M. Russian Folklore, translated by Catherine Ruth Smith. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950.

Spring, D.W., 'Soviet newsreel and the Great Patriotic War,' in Nicholas Pronay and D.W. Spring, eds., Propaganda, Politics and Film, 1918-45, (London, 1982), pp. 270-292.

Stalin, Joseph. *Marxism and Linguistics*. New York: International Publishers, 1951.

-------. *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*. edited by J. Fineberg. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1936.

-------. *Problems of Leninism*. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1947.

-------. *Sochineniia*, (3 volumes), edited by Robert H. McNeal. Stanford: Hoover Institution Foreign Language Publications, 1967.

Stites, Richard, 'Frontline Entertainment,' in Stites, ed., *Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia*, (Bloomington, 1995), pp. 126-140.

-------, 'Iconoclastic Currents in the Russian Revolution: Destroying and Preserving the Past,' in Abbott Gleason, et al, eds., *Bolshevik Culture*, (Bloomington, 1985), pp. 1-24.

-------. *Russian Popular Culture: Entertainment and Society since 1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

-------. *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism, 1860-1930*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978.

Stites, Richard, ed. *Culture and Entertainment in Wartime Russia*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.

Szporluk, Roman, 'History and Russian Ethnocentrism,' in Edward Allworth, ed., *Ethnic Russia in the USSR*, (New York, 1980), pp. 41-54.

Tarkhanov, Alexei and Sergei Kavtaradze. *Stalinist Architecture*. London: Laurence King, 1992.

Tarle, E.V., '*K voprosu o nachale voiny*,' in *Istorik-Marksist*, 9 (Sept., 1928), pp. 101-107.

Tertz, Abram [Andrei Sinyavskii]. *On Socialist Realism*, translated by George Dennis. New York: Pantheon Books, 1960.

Teryaev, G. *A.I. Herzen: Great Russian Thinker and Revolutionary Democrat*. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1954.

Tillett, Lowell. *The Great Friendship: Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities*. Chapel Hill: The

University of North Carolina Press, 1969.

Thompson, Ewa M., 'Nationalist Propaganda in the Soviet Russian Press, 1939-41,' in *Slavic Review*, 50:2 (Summer, 1991), pp. 385-399.

Tolstoy, Alexei. *The Making of Russia*. London: Hutchinson International Authors Ltd., n.d.

-------. *Peter the First*, translated by Tatiana Shebunina. New York: 1959.

The Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers and Leningrad: Aurora Art Publishers, 1979.

Tucker, Robert C. *Stalin as Revolutionary, 1879-1929: A Study in History and Personality*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1973.

-------. *Stalin in Power: The Revolution from Above, 1928-1941*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1990.

Tucker, Robert C., ed. *Stalinism: Essays in Historical Interpretation*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1977.

Tumarkin, Nina. *Lenin Lives!: The Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia*. Cambridge & London, 1983.

Uhlenbruch, Bernd, 'The Annexation of History: Eisenstein and the Ivan Grozny Cult of the 1940s,' in Hans Gunther, ed., *The Culture of the Stalin Period*, (London, 1990), pp. 266-287.

Valkenier, Elizabeth Kridl. *Ilya Repin and the World of Russian Art*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.

Varlamov, Volodymyr, 'Bakunin and the Russian Jacobins and Blanquists,' in C.E. Black, ed., *Rewriting Russian History*, (London, 1957), pp. 302-333.

Velychenko, S. 'Restructuring and the non-Russian Past,' in *Nationalities Papers*, 22(2).

Viola, Lynne. *The Best Sons of the Fatherland*. New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1987.

Vipper, R. *Ivan Grozny*. Translated by J. Fineberg. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1947.

Vucinich, Alexander. *Empire of Knowledge: The Academy of Sciences of the USSR (1917-1979)*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

-------, 'The First Russian State,' in C.E. Black, ed., Rewriting Russian History, (London, 1957), pp. 123-142.

-------. The Soviet Academy of Sciences. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1956.

White, Hayden. Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973.

Wilson, Sarah, 'The Soviet Pavilion in Paris,' in Matthew Cullerne Bown and Brandon Taylor, eds., Art of the Soviets, (Manchester, 1993), pp. 106-120.

Wolfe, Bertram D., 'Party Histories from Lenin to Khrushchev,' in John Keep, ed., Contemporary History in the Soviet Mirror, (London, 1964), pp. 43-61.

Zhdanov, Andrei. Essays on Literature, Philosophy, and Music. New York: International Publishers, 1950.

Ziolkowski, Margaret. Hagiography and Modern Russian Literature. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.

-------. 'The Reversal of Stalinist Literary Motifs: The Image of the Wounded Bird in Recent Russian Literature,' in Modern Language Review, 83 (1988), pp. 106-120.

Zizek, Slavoj. The Metastases of Enjoyment: Six Essays on Woman and Causality. London: Verso, 1994.

Zorkaya, Neya. The Illustrated History of the Soviet Cinema. New York: Hippocrene Books, 1989.